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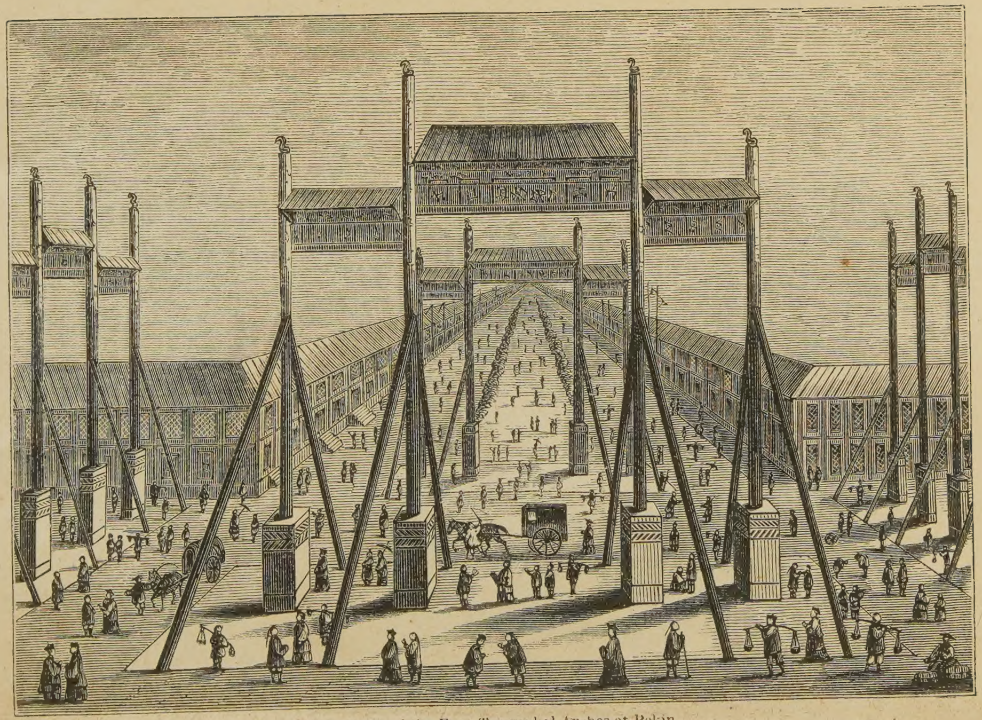


The Street of the Four Triumphal Arches at Pekin.

THE CHINESE EMPIRE.

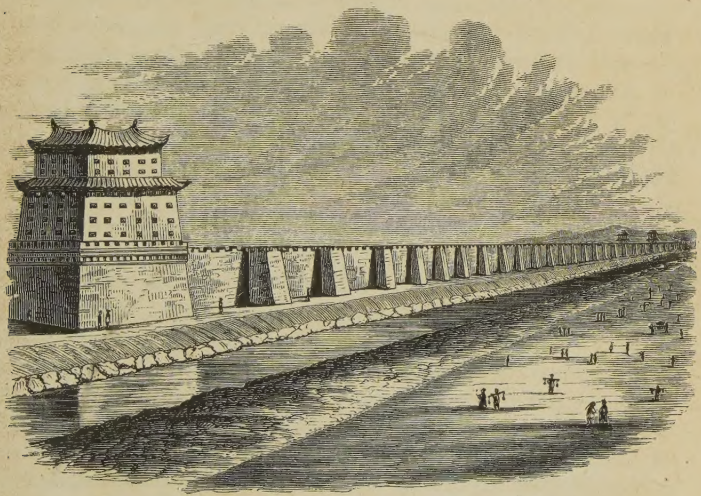
A Sequel

TO

RECOLLECTIONS OF A JOURNEY THROUGH TARTARY AND THIBET.

BY M. HUC

FORMERLY MISSIONARY APOSTOLIC IN CHINA.



View of the Great Wall of China from the neighbourhood of Pekin.

NEW EDITION.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The Author of these volumes is already favourably known to the English public, by his "Travels in Tartary and Thibet," but the present work is one of greater interest and importance than the former. M. Huc has enjoyed such opportunities of becoming acquainted with China as have scarcely fallen to the lot of any European before. During the journey here recorded, — a journey through the very heart of the Empire, from the frontiers of Thibet to Canton,— he stood under the immediate protection of the Emperor, travelling in all the pride and pomp of a high Government functionary, attended humbly by Mandarins, and surrounded by a military escort, and he was brought into constant and intimate relation with persons of the highest rank in the country. During a previous residence of no less than fourteen years in various parts of China, he had been in habits of familiar intercourse with all classes, but more especially with the poor, and while labouring in his vacation in obscurity and secrecy, had looked into the domestic life, and watched the working of the hidden mechanism of society in that mysterious Empire still so imperfectly known, though extending over a surface greater than that of all Europe, and comprising a population of one-third of the human race. His knowledge of the institutions, religion, manners, and customs of the Chinese, was not taken on hearsay from the accounts of others, but gathered from actual experience, and he has communicated his knowledge to the reader, not in a heavy formal dissertation, but in a much pleasanter manner, *à propos* to the various incidents of his extraordinary journey. It will not probably be regarded as matter of complaint that this journey, undertaken in such anomalous circumstances, should present some incidents, surprising enough to be received with doubt did they

come before us without any guarantee. But the well known and high character of M. Huc—the auspices under which the work has appeared — and the internal evidence of veracity that it everywhere presents, afford sufficient warrant, even for what is most singular and unexpected.

It is to be noted also, that on that subject on which, of all others, the statements of a Missionary are usually to be received with hesitation, on the effect, namely, of the labours of himself and his brethren in the conversion of the Chinese, M. Huc betrays no tendency to the customary sanguine exaggeration; and if he has resisted the temptation so often yielded to, of representing the prospects, from missionary labours, in a more favourable light than is warranted by the fact, we may reasonably give him credit for accuracy in cases where his personal wishes and prepossessions are far less, if at all concerned. The narrative is not at all less credible because many scenes of it are as amusing as a comedy, and often not unlike one in the curious game carried on between the eternal shuffling trickeries of the Mandarins, and the courage, humour, and audacity of the missionaries. In several instances, from the peculiar character of the Chinese, a kind of dashing effrontery afforded the only means of escape from perils to which a more timid and feeble traveller would probably have fallen a victim.

In matters of opinion it cannot be expected that the views of the author should always agree with those of English Protestants; he has of course looked at things with his own eyes, and not with ours, but it is never difficult to make allowance for the effect of the refracting medium through which (as it appears to us) he has regarded matters connected with the interests of his Church. His religion, it may be added, is evidently not worn as a garment, but interwoven with every thought and occurrence of his daily life, and it will therefore often attract the spiritual sympathies of those who may differ most widely from him on doctrinal points.

His account of the Chinese Empire, besides the information and amusement it affords, suggests matter for solemn thought, in the picture it presents of a civilised nation, almost wholly removed from religious influence, "without God in the world," and falling rapidly to decay, from no other cause than that of internal moral corruption. M. Huc mentions the (we believe) unparalleled

occurrence of a late Emperor having in an important state document passed in review all the systems of religion known in China (Christianity included), and formally recommended his people to have nothing to do with any. The whole system of society and government appears to be calculated with as little reference as possible to the moral and spiritual nature of man. As one example, among many others, we may mention the extraordinary idea entertained in China of the responsibility of public officers, making the punishment for misconduct in any department in the inverse ratio of the rank of the offender; clerks and other mere instruments being punished most severely, and the highest officers scarcely at all: thus making it evident that the law takes cognizance only of the mere physical fact, and not of the evil intention, in which the whole moral offence consists.

Christianity alone, we conscientiously believe, can heal this inward corruption, and arrest the downward progress of this mighty nation, now no longer separated from us by almost impassable distance. Not merely the statesman and the merchant, but the humblest among us, are now often connected by strong and tender ties with countries equally remote. A breach too has been made in the hitherto impenetrable barrier surrounding these distant Asiatic Empires. The United States have obtained important commercial privileges in Japan; Russia is striving for the same, and the secluded population of China have come forth to mingle (in California and Australia) in some of the busiest haunts of men, and take part in the newest movements of the time.* Of the tremendous insurrection that has broken out in the bosom of the Empire itself, as well as of some mistaken ideas entertained concerning it, the author has himself spoken sufficiently.

A word of explanation may be permitted concerning the plural pronoun constantly used by the author, the *nos majesticum*, as it is called, not very correctly in this instance, for it is obviously employed by M. Huc, as by many others, rather to avoid the appearance of egotism and veil the individual personality. Since it seemed in some measure characteristic, the translator has not ventured to change it for the more customary singular. But

* Recent accounts from Melbourne mention the arrival of Chinese immigrants in such numbers as to cause some serious apprehension on the part of the English residents.

whatever may be thought on this and other trivial points, there is reason to hope from the subject of the work, the means of information enjoyed by the author, and his vivid and dramatic manner of conveying his impressions, that his book will be received in this country with favour, equal to that which has already welcomed it in his own.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

When in a former work we retraced the recollections of our journey in Tartary and Thibet, we were compelled to interrupt our narrative on the frontiers of the Chinese Empire. We expressed, however, in a postscript, the wish to complete some day the task that circumstances compelled us then to leave unfinished. We said, "We still have to speak of our relations with the Chinese Mandarins and the tribunals, as well as to cast a glance on the provinces that we traversed, and to compare them with those that we visited on our former journeys through the Celestial Empire." "This chasm," we added, "we will endeavour to fill up, during whatever hours of leisure we may be able to spare from the labours of our holy ministry."*

The present opportunity has seemed extremely favourable for the accomplishment of this design, and, in default of any other merit, our observations on the Chinese will at least have that of being well timed, since we are making them public at an epoch when the political situation of this great nation is exciting the most general and lively interest.

This vast Empire, which for so long a time has appeared to be sunk in the most profound political apathy, and which even the warlike operations of the English scarcely seem to have disturbed, —this Colossus, has been suddenly shaken to its very foundations by one of those terrible storms that can scarcely pass over a nation without effecting some change in its ancient forms; which leave behind them sometimes better institutions, but always much of desolation and ruin.

If the original causes of the Chinese insurrection are almost entirely unknown in Europe, its more immediate occasion is not

* Recollections of a Journey through Tartary and Thibet.

so. In the first instance, this was an isolated act of highway robbery; then followed the association of several villains of that description, endeavouring to resist the efforts of the Mandarins to repress them, and soon from the very dregs of the population a little army was raised, which began to occasion serious uneasiness to the viceroy of the province of Kouang-si. At length the captain of this gang of robbers, now become the chief of an armed force, proclaimed himself Generalissimo, called in politics and religion to the assistance of his revolt, summoned around him the secret societies that swarm in the Empire, declared himself the restorer of Chinese nationality against the usurpation of the Mantchoo Tartar race, assumed the title of Emperor, under the pompous name of Tien-te (Celestial Virtue,) and denominated himself also the younger brother of Jesus Christ. By means such as these has an Empire of three hundred millions of men been brought to the brink of destruction.

It may appear scarcely credible that a petty revolt of banditti should have increased to such an extent as to become formidable, and assume a sort of national character; but for those who are acquainted with China and its history it will not seem very surprising. This country has always been the classic ground of revolutions, and its annals are but the narrative of a long series of popular commotions and political vicissitudes. In the period of time between the year 420, when the Franks entered Gaul, and 1644, when Louis XIV. ascended the throne of France, and the Tartars established themselves in Pekin, a period of twelve hundred and twenty-four years, China underwent fifteen changes of dynasty, all accompanied by frightful civil wars.

Since the invasion of the Mantchoo Tartar race, the nation has appeared, it is true, quite indifferent to the political situation of the country, and altogether absorbed in material enjoyments; but in the bosom of this sceptical and avaricious people, there has always remained a powerful and vivacious spark that the Tartar government has never been able to extirpate; secret societies have been formed all over the Empire, the members of which have seen with impatience the Mantchoo domination, and cherished the idea of overthrowing it to obtain a national government. These innumerable conspirators were all ready for revolt, and predetermined to support it, let the signal come from whence it might, whether

from a discontented viceroy or a highway robber. On the other hand, the agents of Government had contributed not a little by their conduct to provoke the outbreak. Their unheard-of exactions had filled up the measure of wrong doing, and great numbers of the Chinese, some driven by indignation, and others by poverty and despair, joined the ranks of the insurgents, for the sake of even a remote chance of ameliorating their condition, certain that they could not be more oppressed, let the new government be as bad as it might.

It is also far from impossible that another cause, but little apparent, may really have exercised considerable influence in the explosion of this Chinese insurrection; namely, the latent infiltration of European ideas, put in circulation in the free ports and along the coast by the commerce of the Western nations, and carried by the missionaries into the very heart of the Empire, and to the most remote provinces. The people at large care little enough about what is thought or done by Europeans, whose very existence is all but unknown to them; but the educated classes do at present think much of foreign nations, and cultivate geography with great success. We have often in our journeys met with Mandarins, who had very correct notions of European affairs, and it is these learned men, who give the tone to opinion, and regulate the course of popular thought, so that the common people may very well be following the impulse of European ideas, without knowing so much as the name of Europe.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the insurrection is the religious character that its chiefs have sought, from its very commencement, to impress upon it. Every one must be struck with the new doctrines with which the proclamations and manifestoes of the Pretender and his generals have been filled. The unity of God has been distinctly expressed; and around this fundamental dogma have been grouped a number of ideas borrowed from the Old and New Testament. War has been declared at the same time to idolatry and to the Tartar dynasty; for after having defeated the imperial troops, and overthrown the authority of the Mandarins, the insurgents have never failed to destroy the pagodas and massacre the Bonzes.

As soon as these facts became known in Europe, it was eagerly proclaimed everywhere, that the Chinese nation had decided on

embracing Christianity, and the Bible Society did not fail to claim the merit and glory of this marvellous conversion.

We do not, however, give the slightest credit to the alleged Christianity of the insurgents, and the religious and mystical sentiments expressed in these manifestoes inspire us with no great confidence. In the second place, it is by no means necessary to have recourse to the Protestant Propaganda to account for the more or less Christian ideas remarked in the proclamations of the revolutionary Chinese. There exist in all the provinces a very considerable number of Mussulmans, who have their Koran and their mosques. It is to be presumed that these Mahometans, who have already several times attempted to overthrow the Tartar dynasty, and have always distinguished themselves by a violent opposition to the Government, would have thrown themselves with ardour into the ranks of the insurrection. Many of these must have become generals, and have mingled in the councils of Tien-te. It is therefore not wonderful to find among them the doctrine of the unity of God, and other ideas of Biblical origin, though whimsically expressed.

The Chinese have also for a long time had at their command a precious collection of books of Christian doctrine, composed by the ancient missionaries, and which, even in a purely literary point of view, are much esteemed in the Empire. These books are diffused in great numbers throughout all the provinces, and it is more probable that the Chinese innovators have drawn the ideas in question from these sources than from the Bibles prudently deposited by the Methodist on the seashore.

The new faith proclaimed by the insurrectional government, though vague and ill-defined, does nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, indicate great progress; it is an immense step in the path that leads to the truth. This initiation of China into ideas so opposed to the scepticism of the masses, and their coarse tendencies, is, perhaps, a symptom of that mysterious march of all nations towards unity, which is spoken of by Count de Maistre, and which, according to the expression which he borrows from the sacred writings, we ought to "salute from afar;"* but for the present it appears to us difficult to see in the chief of this Chinese

* Soirées de St. Petersburg — Premier Entretien.

insurrection anything else than a kind of Chinese Mahomet, seeking to establish his power by fire and sword, and crying to his fanatical partisans—"There is no God but God, and Tien-te is the younger brother of Jesus Christ."

And now, what will be the result of this Chinese insurrection? Will its promoters succeed in their design of establishing a new dynasty, and a new worship, more in harmony with their lately adopted faith? Or will the Son of Heaven have power to re-establish the throne so roughly shaken? The recent course of events is too imperfectly known to us, and appears also too little decisive, to enable us to determine these questions.

Yet, notwithstanding the impossibility of forming any well-grounded opinion on the probable issue of the struggle, the journalists of Europe have declared that were the Tartar dynasty once overthrown, the nation would merely return into its traditional course. It seems to us that this is an error. What is called the Chinese system has really no existence; for this expression can be understood in no other sense than by supposing it opposed to a Tartar system. Now there is not, and never was a Tartar system. The Mantchoo race has, indeed, imposed its yoke upon China, but has had scarcely any influence on the Chinese mind; it has not been able to do much more than introduce some slight modifications into the national costume, and force the conquered people to shave their heads and wear a tail. The Chinese have been governed mostly by the same institutions after as before the conquest; they have always remained faithful to the traditions of their ancestors, and have, in fact, in a great measure, absorbed the Tartar race, and imposed upon it their own manners and civilisation. They have even succeeded in nearly extinguishing the Mantchoo language, and replacing it by their own. They have nullified the Tartar action on the Empire, by engrossing the greater part of the offices that stand between the governors and the governed. Almost all employments, in fact, if we except the chief military posts, and the highest dignities of the State, have become the exclusive inheritance of the Chinese, who possess, more frequently than the Tartars, the special kinds of knowledge necessary to fill them. As for the Tartars, isolated and lost in the immensity of the Empire, they have retained the privilege of watching over the security of the frontier, occupying the fortified places, and mounting guard at the gates of the imperial palace.

It is not at all surprising that the state of affairs in China should have resisted the Mantchoo invasion, and should not have been in the slightest degree altered by the accession of a foreign dynasty. China differs in this, as in other respects, widely from Europe. The countless revolutions and political convulsions of which it has been the theatre have destroyed nothing, and for the simple reason, that one of the most distinctive features of the Chinese character is a profound, in some measure religious, veneration for ancient institutions, and all things ancient. After every successive revolution this extraordinary people has applied itself to reconstitute the past, and recall the antique traditions, in order not to depart from the rites established by their ancestors, and this is one of the circumstances that may serve to explain how this nation, which at so early a period attained so remarkable a degree of civilisation, has remained stationary and made no progress for centuries.

Can it be hoped, nevertheless, that the present insurrection will bring any modification in this state of things? We must be permitted to doubt this. It is even probable that the unsympathising disposition of the Chinese towards the nations of the West will remain what it has always been. China is far from being open; and whatever may be said, we believe that our missions have very little to hope there. We must not forget, in fact, that Christianity is in no way concerned in the crisis which the Empire is now passing through. The Christians, too wise and prudent to hoist a political standard, are also too few in number to exercise any sensible influence on the affairs of the country, and they have remained neutral. For this reason they have become equally suspected by both parties, and we fear will be hereafter equally exposed to punishment whichever side may be ultimately victorious. Should the Mantchoo Government triumph over the insurrection, which already more than once has displayed the cross upon its standards, it will have no mercy on the Christians, and this long struggle will have only served to redouble its suspicions and embitter its wrath; if, on the contrary, Tien-te should gain the victory, and succeed in driving out the ancient conquerors of China, since he claims not only to found a new dynasty, but also a new worship, he will, in the intoxication of victory, break through every obstacle that may oppose his projects.

Thus the conclusion of the civil war may be to the Christians

the signal of a new persecution. These terrible trials need not, indeed, induce us to despair of the future prospects of Christianity in China: for we know that the Almighty rules the nations at his pleasure, that He can, when He pleases, bring good out of evil, and that often, where men think all is lost, it is then precisely that all is saved.

In fact, notwithstanding the worship professed by the Chinese for their ancient institutions — if circumstances should at length force the European element to quit its neutrality, and mingle in the affairs of the Celestial Empire, this intervention would probably be the source of remarkable changes, and might gradually produce a complete transformation of China. It may be even, apart from the hypothesis of an intervention, that the new ideas introduced by the revolutionary Chinese will of themselves prove active enough to exercise considerable influence over the destinies of the Empire. Then will regenerated China assume a new aspect, and who knows whether it may not ultimately succeed in placing itself on a level with European nations?

These prospects, uncertain as they are, have encouraged us in the execution of our task. The moment, in fact, when the Tartar-Mantchoo dynasty appears to be tottering to its fall, and China on the eve of a great social and political transformation, is the most suitable for saying what we know concerning this great Empire. Should it be destined to undergo a total change, we shall have contributed to preserve the memory of what it was, and to rescue from oblivion those ancient customs which have rendered it in our own day an enigma to Europe. Whilst the insurrection is proceeding in its work of demolition, we will labour in construction; and if we can succeed in conveying an exact idea of Chinese society, as it appeared to us in the course of our long peregrinations, our object will have been attained, and we shall have nothing more to say than, as the authors of former days used to do, "*Soli Deo honos et gloria.*"

In our former work, "Recollections of a Journey," we related our travels across the deserts of Tartary, and the incidents of our residence in Thibet, — a residence shortened by the ill-will of Chinese politicians, and finally, our return to China, under the escort of Mandarins.

We are now about to resume our narrative where we then laid

it down, that is to say, from the moment when, having just crossed the frontiers of China, we were carried by our conductors towards the capital of Sse-tchouen, to be there brought to trial.

This second part of our narrative will turn exclusively upon China, and we will endeavour to correct as much as possible the erroneous and absurd ideas that have prevailed from time immemorial concerning the Chinese people. The efforts made by learned Orientalists, and principally by M. Abel Remusat, to rectify the errors of Europeans on that subject, have not had all the success they merited, for the most contradictory statements are constantly being uttered and printed concerning them. It is not difficult to trace these errors and contradictions to their sources, in the accounts published at various epochs by those who have penetrated into China, and also by those who have never set foot in it.

When, in the sixteenth century, the Catholic missionaries arrived, bearing the message of the Gospel to the innumerable nations who form collectively the Chinese Empire, the spectacle that presented itself to their observation was calculated to strike them with astonishment, and even with admiration. Europe, which they had just quitted, was in the convulsions of intellectual and political anarchy. The arts, industry, commerce, the general aspect of cities and their population, was totally different from what we see at the present day. The West had scarcely entered on the path of material civilisation. China, on the contrary, stood in some measure at the zenith of her prosperity. Her political and civil institutions worked with admirable regularity. The Emperor and his Mandarins were truly the "Father and Mother"* of the people, and by both high and low the laws were faithfully observed. The imaginations of the missionaries could not but be powerfully affected by this immense Empire, with its numerous and orderly population, its fields so skilfully cultivated, its great cities, its magnificent rivers, its fine system of canals, and its entire and prosperous civilisation. The comparison was certainly at that time not to the advantage of Europe, and the missionaries were inclined to admire everything they saw in the new country of their adoption.

They often exaggerated what was good in it, and they did not

* A title by which in China the representatives of authority are designated.

see the accompanying evil, and thus they have often published, in perfect good faith, descriptions of China that were much too flattering to be correct.

Modern missionaries have perhaps fallen into the contrary extreme. Europe has been of late years marching from progress to progress, and almost every passing day has been signalised by some new discovery; China, on the contrary, is in a state of decay, the vices that disfigured its ancient institutions have increased, and whatever good may have been mingled in them has almost wholly disappeared. It has happened, therefore, that the missionaries, setting out with magnificent ideas of the splendour of Chinese civilisation, and finding the country really full of disorder and misery, have come to conclusions respecting it the very reverse of those formed by their predecessors three centuries ago. Under the influence of these sentiments, they have given us pictures of China drawn in gloomy colours. They have, without intending it, exaggerated its evils, as their predecessors had exaggerated what was good; and these different estimates have produced contradictory accounts, which were not likely to throw much clear light on the facts of the case. Mere tourists, too, have of course furnished their contingent to increase the confusion.

Few of the travellers who have been attracted either by curiosity or interest to visit the Chinese shore have not felt the desire to make the fact known to the world, at least through the newspapers. They have seen little indeed, but that has not prevented them from writing much, and often from slandering the Chinese, for no other reason than that the missionaries formerly overpraised them. Very frequently they have drawn largely in their writings from the accounts of embassies, which unfortunately are regarded as great authorities, although M. Abel Remusat has more than once endeavoured to reduce them to their just value.

"The ideas unfavourable to the Chinese," says this skilful and impartial critic, "are not new, but they have been recently diffused and credited. They are partly due to the authors of the Narratives of the Dutch and the two English Embassies.

"The missionaries had boasted so much of Chinese manners and Chinese policy, that in order to say something new on the subject, it was necessary to take the other side. There were also many persons disposed to believe that as they were professedly

religious men, they had yielded in their writings to the prejudices of their profession, and the interests of their calling. Lay observers are much less suspected, and in their eyes a missionary is hardly a traveller. How could a man who was neither a Jesuit nor a Dominican fail to be a model of veracity and impartiality?

"Nevertheless, if we consider the matter a little more attentively, we shall see that the travellers, on whom so much reliance has been placed, have not quite as many claims to confidence as has been supposed. No one of them was acquainted with the language of the country, whilst the Jesuits could even write in Chinese, so as to equal the best native *literati*. No one of them ever saw the Chinese otherwise than on occasions of ceremony, in visits of etiquette, or at festivals strictly regulated by the 'Rites,' whilst the missionaries made their way everywhere, from the Imperial Court to the most remote provinces and the most humble villages. These travellers never fail to speak very well of the productions of the country, the manners of the inhabitants, the genius of the Government, for they had under their eyes, while writing their narrative of their travels, the collection of '*Lettres Édifiantes*,' the compilation of Duhalde, and the memoirs of the missionaries. You never find, therefore, an idea of any importance in one that has escaped the others, for they have copied faithfully, and that was the best thing they could do. What could the most able men have said in their place?

"The situation of travellers in China is not usually an enviable one. At their departure from Canton they are imprisoned in closed boats; they are guarded carefully from sight all along the great canal; they are what we may call put under arrest immediately on their arrival at Pekin; and, after two or three official receptions and interrogatories, they are hastily sent back again. As they are not allowed the slightest communication with the outer world, they can really describe from their own knowledge nothing more than the hedge of soldiers by which they have been surrounded, the songs of the boatmen who have accompanied them, the formalities employed by the inspectors who have searched them, and the evolutions of the grandees who prostrated themselves with them before the Son of Heaven. The history of the whole affair has been given by one of these travellers with as much *naïveté* as precision. He says, 'they entered Pekin like

beggars, stayed in it like prisoners, and were driven from it like thieves.'*

"This kind of reception, quite conformable to the laws of the Empire, explains very well the feeling of aversion to China mostly perceptible in these narratives. The writers have enjoyed neither freedom nor pleasure there, but have met with troublesome customs, inconvenient furniture, and dishes that were not to their taste; and bad dinners and bad lodgings will leave unpleasant recollections in the most impartial minds." †

It is assuredly not by traversing the country in this fashion, or by residing some time in a port half Europeanised, that it is possible to become acquainted with Chinese society. For that you must be in some measure identified with the life of the Chinese; you must have lived long among them, and have almost become a Chinese yourself. This is what we did for a period of fourteen years, and we are therefore in a position to speak with confidence concerning an Empire that we had adopted as a second country, and that we entered without thinking of a return. Circumstances have also greatly favoured us in our observations, for we have been enabled to traverse several times the various provinces of the Empire, and compare them with each other, as well as to become initiated into the manners of the Chinese of the highest class, in the midst of which we constantly lived during our journey from the frontiers of Thibet to Canton.

Our readers must not, however, expect to find in our narrative a great number of those edifying details which have so great a charm for pious and believing souls, and which, perhaps, they had a right to look for in the pages of a missionary.

It is our purpose to address readers of all opinions, and to make China known to all; not merely to preserve the memory of facts connected with our mission. These interesting particulars must be sought in the "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," those veritable bulletins of the Church militant, in which are recorded the acts of apostles, the virtues of neophytes, and the struggles and sufferings of martyrs. Our object in these volumes has been to describe the theatre of this peaceful warfare, and to

* Account of the Embassy of Lord Macartney.
† Mélanges Posthumes, p. 336.

make known the populations that the Church of God desires to subject to her rule, and bring within her fold. We hope it will then be more easy to understand the long struggles of Christianity in China, and to appreciate its victories.

One word more. Many things in these volumes will perhaps appear improbable, especially if looked at merely with European ideas, and without placing ourselves—if we may be permitted the expression—in the Chinese point of view.

We trust, however, that our readers will give us credit for veracity, and dispense us from the necessity of employing the language that the celebrated Marco Polo thought himself obliged to address to his readers in the beginning of his interesting narrative: —

"And we will put down the things we have seen as seen, and the things we have heard as heard, in order that our book may be honest and true without any lie, and that every one that may read or hear this book may believe it; for all the things it contains are true." *

Paris, 24th May, 1854.

* Recueil des Voyages de la Société de Géographie.—Voyage de Marco Polo, l. i. p. 2.

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THE

CHINESE EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

Arrangements for our Departure. — New Costume. — Departure from Ta-tsien-lou. — Farewell of our Thibetan Escort. — Aspect of the Road. — Suspension-bridge over the River Lou. — Family of our Conductor. — Palanquin-bearers. — Long Caravans of Porters. — Riot on our Account in the Town of Ya-tcheou. — Country assumes definitively a Chinese Character. — Triumphal Arches and Monuments erected in honour of Virgins and Widows. — Communal Palaces for travelling Mandarins. — Discovery of a Christian Family. — Aristocracy of Khioung-tcheou. — Introduction and Ravages of Opium in China. — Magnificent Monastery of Bonzes. — Interview with a Christian of the Capital of Sse-tchouen. — Arrival at Tching-tou-fou.

Two years had passed since we bade adieu to the Christians of the Valley of Black Waters. With the exception of a residence of some months in the Lama convent of Koumboum, and in the bosom of the capital of Buddhism, we had been since then perpetually journeying through the vast deserts of Tartary and over the high mountains of Thibet. But these two years of inexpressible fatigue were not sufficient: we were still far from the end of our sufferings. Before we could hope to enjoy any repose, we had to cross the frontiers of China, and traverse this immense empire from West to East.

Formerly, upon our first entrance on the mission, we had traversed it throughout its entire extent from North to South; but that was secretly, by stealth, — along bye-paths and in darkness, — pretty much, in fact, in the fashion of bales of contraband goods.

Now our position was altogether different. We were to march openly in broad daylight, keeping the middle of the Imperial high road. Those mandarins, the very sight of whom used to throw us

into a cold shiver, and who would have been so extremely happy to put us to the torture, if we had fallen into their hands, had now to make up their minds to serve us for an escort, and to overwhelm us with respect and politeness all along the road.

We were about to become acquainted, in China, with a civilisation extremely unlike that of Europe, but not less complete in its kind. The climate, too, would be no longer the same, and the means of communication would be greatly superior to those of Tartary and Thibet.

No more fear of snow, and rocks, and precipices,—of wild beasts and robbers of the desert. An immense population, provisions in abundance, a richly varied magnificent landscape, luxurious and agreeable, though sometimes whimsical habitations,—this was what we might look for during this new and long stage of our journey. We knew the Chinese, however, too well to feel quite at our ease in this altered position. Ki-chan* had, indeed, given orders that we should be treated kindly, but, in fact, we were, after all, given up to the tender mercies of the mandarins. After having escaped a thousand dangers in the wild countries that we had just passed through, we felt no security that we were not to perish of hunger and privation in the very bosom of abundance and civilisation, and we were convinced that our fate would greatly depend on the attitude we should assume from the beginning.

We have observed elsewhere that the Chinese, and especially the mandarins, are strong against the weak and weak against the strong. To domineer over, and crush all around them, is the object they constantly have in view, and to attain it they have an inexhaustible resource in their native cunning and pliability of character. Once allow them to get the upper hand, and it is all over with you; but if you can only succeed in mastering them, you will find them ever after as docile and manageable as children. You may turn and twist them which way you will; but beware of showing yourself weak with them for a moment, for they must be ruled with an iron hand. The Chinese mandarins are pretty much like their own long bamboos. If one can but manage to get hold of them in the right way, they are easily bent double and kept so; but if for a second you let go, they are up again in a moment as straight as ever. It was on a constant struggle, therefore, that we were about to enter—a struggle of every day, and

* Chinese ambassador at the Court of Lha-ssa. See "Recollections of a Journey," &c., vol. ii. p. 285.

all day long, from *Ta-tsien-lou* to Canton. There was no middle course: we must either submit to their will or make them submit to ours; and we determined to adopt the latter mode of proceeding; for we were by no means inclined to have our long pilgrimage terminate in some ditch behind the ramparts of a Chinese town*; that was evidently not the martyrdom that missionaries sigh after. In the first place, we had to maintain a long and vehement dispute with the principal mandarin of Ta-tsien-lou†, who would not consent that we should continue our journey in palanquins: he was obliged to give way, however, thanks to the energy and perseverance of our protests. For these two years past we had had to bestride horses of every size, age, and quality, so that our limbs longed at last to stretch themselves out at ease in a palanquin.

After this first triumph, it was necessary to revolt against the decrees of the "Tribunal of Rites," on the subject of the costume that we were to adopt. We had said to ourselves, in every country in the world, and especially in China, clothes play a very important part in the affairs of mankind; and since we have to inspire a salutary fear among the Chinese, it is by no means a matter of indifference in what way we are to be dressed. We cast aside, therefore, our Thibet costume,—the frightful wolfskin cap, the checked hose, and the long fur tunic, that exhaled so strong an odour of beef and mutton, and we got a skilful tailor to make us some beautiful sky-blue robes in the newest fashion of Pekin. We provided ourselves with magnificent black satin boots, adorned with soles of dazzling whiteness. So far the aforesaid Tribunal of Rites had no objection; but when we proceeded to gird up our

* Our fears were not chimerical. On our arrival at Macao, we learned that a French *Lazariste*, M. Carayon, had been recognised and arrested in one of our missions in the north of China. According to the decree obtained by M. Lagrenée, a missionary could not be condemned and put to death in the same summary manner as before; but was to be sent, *in an honourable manner*, to Macao. The honourable manner in which M. Carayon was sent to Canton, was in chains, and in the company of malefactors; and he was exposed to such cruel ill-treatment on the way, that he died very shortly afterwards.

Another, an Italian missionary, sent there in the same manner, was actually refused the smallest allowance of food, and died of starvation the very day of his arrival at Canton. It would be too long to mention the names of all the missionaries who, quite recently, have fallen victims to the malice of the Chinese; but, so lately as 1851, M. Vacher, of the Foreign Missions, was arrested in the province of *Yun-nan*, and thrown into prison, where shortly afterwards he was suffocated.

† The first town on the Chinese frontier that you meet with in coming from Thibet.

loins with red sashes, and cover our heads with embroidered yellow caps, we caused a universal shudder among all beholders, and the emotion ran through the town like an electric current, till it reached the civil and military authorities. They cried aloud that the red sash and the yellow cap were the attributes of Imperial Majesty, — allowable only to the family of the Emperor, and forbidden to the people under pain of perpetual banishment. On this point the Tribunal of Rites would be inflexible, and we must reform our costume accordingly. We, on our side, alleged, that being strangers, travelling as such, and by authority, we were not bound to conform to the ritual of the empire, — but had the right of following the fashion of our own country, which allowed every one to choose the form and colour of his garments, according to his own fancy. They insisted, — they became angry, — they flew into a furious passion; — we remained calm and immovable, but vowing that we would never part with our red sashes and yellow caps. Our obstinacy was not to be overcome, and the mandarins submitted — as they ought to do.

The military mandarin of Mussulman origin, whom we had picked up at *Ly-tang* after the decease of the Pacificator of Kingdoms*, was to escort us to *Tching-tou* the capital of the province of *Sse-tchouen*. It had been agreed that his mission should end on the frontier, but the mandarins of Ta-tsien-lou found us such crabbed and troublesome customers, that they declined the honour of conducting our caravan. The Mussulman seemed not at all ambitious of it; but, like a true disciple of Mahomed, he knew how to resign himself to his fate, and say calmly, "It is written."

At last we quitted Ta-tsien-lou, to the great satisfaction of the mandarins of the place, who had begun to despair of converting us to their ideas of civilisation. We kept the same escort that we had taken at *Lha-ssa*, only reinforced by some young recruits of the province, commanded by a long, lean corporal, who with his robes tucked up to his middle, his legs naked, a large umbrella in one hand, and a fan in the other, had not, it must be owned, a very strikingly military appearance. As for ourselves, snugly ensconced in our dear palanquins, we were borne rapidly along by four vigorous Chinese bearers, over excavations, rocks, and mud holes, and we soon outstripped our escort, who could by no means vie with the bearers in strength and agility.

After marching five li† we halted; the Chinese set down our

* See "Recollections of a Journey," vol. ii. p. 398.

† A *li* is the tenth of a French league.

palanquin, and invited us to get out in very polite terms, and with a slight smile that seemed to indicate some mystery; and, as soon as we were out, we were agreeably surprised to find behind a rocky hill the Lama Dchiamdchan, with his little Thibetan troop.* These honest fellows had come to meet us in order to bid us farewell once more in the manner of their country. They had prepared a collation of Chinese pastry, preserves, apricots, and rice wine, which they had spread on the grass, under the shade of some large trees, and we were soon seated round it in a mood of mingled joy and sadness. We were happy to find ourselves once more together, but our joy was greatly damped by the thought that we were again about to separate and most likely for ever. The escort that we had left behind was not long in coming up, and after having bade adieu to our dear Thibetans and said, "*Au revoir*," we again got into our palanquins.

Au revoir — those words so full of consolation, and which so often dry the tears of parting friends, — how many times had we pronounced them in the sure and certain hope of seeing again one day those to whom they were addressed! How many times in China, in Tartary, in Thibet, in Egypt, in Palestine, had we uttered them to friends whom we were to see no more!

God hides the future from us: He will not permit us to know his designs with respect to us, — and it is in accordance with his infinite goodness that he does not, for there are separations that would kill us if we knew them to be for ever. These Thibetans, to whom we were attached by so many ties, we never saw again; but we shall always retain one great consolation — we can pray to God for these interesting populations, and petition that the missionaries charged to preach the Gospel to them may succeed in guiding them from the chill and darkness of Buddhism to the light and vivifying warmth of the Christian faith.

The road that we had been following from Ta-tsien-lou had been constantly descending, and we soon found ourselves in a deep and narrow valley, watered by a limpid stream whose banks were fringed by willows and bamboos. On either side arose, almost perpendicularly, lofty and majestic mountains, ornamented with stately trees, and an inexhaustible variety of plants and flowers. Our eyes feasted on the brilliant colours, and the exquisite verdure, and were filled with tears of delight as we inhaled the balmy fragrance of the air: our whole being seemed to expand

* The chief of the Thibet escort that had accompanied us from Lha-ssa to the Chinese frontier. See "Recollections," vol. ii. p. 398.

with rapture. One must have lived for two whole years amidst ice and snow, dreary arid mountains and sandy deserts, to feel all the intoxicating charm of such a landscape, and the delicious repose afforded by fresh green grass to an eye wearied by the dead monotonous whiteness of snow.

The road led along the course of the stream. Sometimes we passed from one bank to the other over little wooden bridges covered with turf, and sometimes over large stones thrown into the bed of the rivulet. But nothing relaxed the speed of our bearers; on they went, over every obstacle, and always with the same rapidity, agility, and courage. Now and then they made a short halt to wipe the sweat from their brows and smoke a pipe, and then they resumed their march with redoubled vigour. The narrow valley we were passing through seemed but little frequented; we met only from time to time some parties of travellers, amongst whom it was easy for us to distinguish the vigorous, energetic, and barbarous Thibetan from the pallid cunning-looking faces of the civilised Chinese. On all sides we could see flocks of goats and long-haired oxen, feeding on the mountain pastures, whilst countless birds warbled amid the branches of the trees.

We passed the first night in a humble and badly provided inn; but as the habitations we had met with in Thibet had not accustomed us to much luxury, we were very well pleased with what we found. The miseries of every kind that we had suffered, had had the effect of rendering us patient under all the trials of life.

On the following day, the road became more wild and perilous. As we advanced, the valley closed in, and became encumbered with enormous masses of rock and great trees that had fallen from the crest of the mountains. The stream that had borne us company the day before, like a faithful friend, now gradually turned away from us, and at last disappeared in a deep gorge. A torrent that we had heard roaring for a long time, like distant thunder, suddenly came in sight from behind a mountain and dashed itself furiously over the rocks. We followed it a long time in its erratic course, and saw it descend from point to point in noisy cascades, or trail its greenish waters like a huge serpent into dark hollows of the mountains. On this day we had no longer the pleasure of gazing on a peaceful and smiling landscape of trees and flowers, but this wild and savage grandeur of nature was not without its charms.

We left these rugged defiles at last behind us, and having crossed a broad valley called *Hoang-tsao-ping* (Yellow Grass Plains), where

there is a great variety of culture and vegetation, we arrived at the celebrated bridge of *Lou-ting-khaio*, which we had to cross on foot and at a slow pace. This bridge was built in 1701. It is 192 feet long, and only ten wide, and is composed of nine enormous iron chains, strongly stretched from one bank to the other, and on which are laid transverse planks, tolerably well fitted, but moveable. The river Lou, which it crosses, has such a rapid current, that it has been found impossible to build a bridge of any other kind. The two banks are very high, so when you are in the middle of the bridge, if you look below at the swiftly running waters it is prudent to keep fast hold of the railing; and as the bridge is extremely elastic, it is necessary to walk very slowly, to avoid the risk of pitching over.

On the other side of the river Lou is a little town, where we were received very noisily by a great concourse of people: it was the native place of our Mussulman mandarin, the conductor of the caravan; and it was decided that we were to stop there for a day. It was certainly only fair that the mandarin, who had passed two years at Ly-tang, on the road to Thibet, should be allowed to pass one day with his family. The next morning he presented to us with paternal pride his two children, gorgeously attired, but with faces so flushed and surprised, and arms and legs apparently so stiff and awkward, that we could not help thinking they were lodged for the first time in these fine clothes. We appreciated, however, the courtesy of our mandarin, gave the little things some sweetmeats and kind words, and caressed them as well as we could, finding that after all they were really very pretty and intelligent; whilst their papa, smiling at one and the other, seemed quite to expand with pleasure.

I wish we could give as good an account of the mandarin's kitchen as of his nursery; but perhaps the worthy man thought the having admired and contemplated his offspring for two hours was enough to satisfy us, and that we should desire nothing more, for he served us up a most detestable dinner. This suggested to us that we had to do with a person who was inclined to make some little profit out of our supplies on the road, and that if we did not take care it might be likely enough that famine and death would be found at the end of it. We therefore knitted our brows, and gave our conductor to understand that we expected to live rather differently here in China to what we had done in the mountains of Thibet. Excuses of course were not wanting, but we had made up our minds never to admit any.

Amongst the inhabitants of Lou-ting-khiao the Thibetan ele-

ment is still observable in manners and costume; but by degrees, as you advance, this mixture disappears, and there remains soon nothing but what is purely Chinese.

We quitted this town early in the morning, and crossed a high mountain, on the summit of which is an immense plateau, with a lake half a league broad in the middle. The paths that lead upward to this plateau are so tortuous and difficult, that the Chinese Itinerary * describes them by saying that they are only fit for birds; and on the following day we were favoured with a by no means pleasing reminiscence of the terrible ascent of the mountains of Thibet. We scaled the *Fey-yué-ling*, "a gigantic mountain which rises almost perpendicularly, and whose peaks are painful to the eyes of the traveller. During the whole year it is covered with snow, and surrounded by clouds that reach to its very foot. The road is frightful, and passes over rocks and chasms; it is one of the most difficult in all China, and no place of rest can be found on it." This description, which we borrow from the Chinese Itinerary, is perfectly correct. On this mountain we again found snow, and the sight of it seemed to recall all the horrors and miseries of the journey through Thibet and Tartary. We felt like men who, after having climbed by prodigious exertions out of an abyss, find themselves cast down into it a second time. The bearers of our palanquin performed prodigies of skill, strength, and courage. In the most difficult places, we wished to get out, to afford them a little relief; but they would very seldom allow us to do so, for they felt a pride in climbing like chamois over the steepest rocks, and passing along the edge of the most tremendous precipices, while carrying on their shoulders our heavy palanquins, which seemed always tottering over the abyss. Many times we felt a cold shudder run through our veins, for a single false step would have been sufficient to precipitate us to the bottom of the gulf beneath, and dash us to pieces against the rocks. But nothing can equal the steadiness and agility of these indefatigable bearers; and it is only among the wonderful Chinese that it is possible to find such people. While they are running panting along these terrific roads, their bodies dripping with perspiration, and every moment in danger of breaking their limbs, you may hear them laugh, joke, and pun as if they were seated quietly at their tea-table. Notwithstanding the indescribable fatigues that they undergo, too, they are very badly remunerated. The rate of their wages is fixed at a sapeck a li, which comes to about a half-

* See what is said of the Chinese Itinerary in the "Recollections."

penny for a French league. Thus they cannot at the very utmost gain more than five pence a day, and as there are many days in the year, during which it is impossible for them to exercise their employment, they have not, on an average, more than three pence a day. With that they have to feed, clothe, and lodge themselves, besides keeping enough to furnish them the means of passing the greater part of the night in play and smoking opium.

The food of the common people in China is, it is true, almost incredibly cheap ; and the palanquin-bearer is by profession something of a marauder,—besides having every where the privilege of taking up his quarters for the night in a pagoda, an inn, or somewhere about the courts of law. His toilette, too, is not very expensive or complicated, for it consists of nothing more than a pair of drawers reaching to the middle of the thigh, and sandals of rice straw. He generally possesses also a short jacket, but he very seldom puts it more than half on.

The palanquin-bearer is one of the most original types among the Chinese, and we shall often have occasion to study him.

On the summit of the mountain ours allowed themselves a little rest, devoured eagerly some little cakes of maize flour, and smoked several pipes of tobacco. During this time we remained contemplating in silence the great reddish-grey clouds that were sometimes floating below, sometimes rolling down the sides of the mountains, sometimes heaving and dilating themselves as if they were going to rise up to us. Beneath the clouds, decreased to miniature size by the distance, appeared rocks and deep ravines, and foaming torrents, and cascades and carefully cultivated valleys, where large trees of thick dark foliage were clearly marked out against the tender green of the rice fields. The picture was completed by some scattered habitations, half hidden in tufts of bamboo, whence rose at intervals light wreaths of smoke.

Notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers of the road across this mountain, it is much frequented by travellers, for there is no other way to Ta-tsien-lou, a great place of trade between China and the tribes of Thibet. You meet every moment on these narrow paths long files of porters carrying brick tea, which is prepared at *Khioung-Tcheou*, and forwarded from Ta-tsien-lou to the different provinces of Thibet. This tea, after having been subjected to strong pressure, is made up into bales in coarse matting, and fastened by leathern thongs to the backs of Chinese porters, who carry enormous loads of it. You even see among them old men, women, and children, who go climbing, one after another, up the steep sides of the mountain. They advance in silence, with

slow steps, leaning on great iron-pointed sticks, and with their eyes fixed on the ground; and beasts of burden would certainly not endure so well, the constant and excessive fatigue to which these slaves of poverty are subjected. From time to time, he who is at the head of the file gives the signal for a short halt, by striking the mountain with his iron-pointed stick; those who follow him imitate this signal in succession, and soon the whole line has stopped, and each individual, placing his stick behind him, so as to relieve himself a little of the weight, lifts up his head, and utters a long whistling sound like a sigh of pain. In this way they endeavour to recover their strength, and get a little air into their exhausted lungs; but after a minute or two's rest, the heavy weight again falls on the back and head, the body is again bent towards the ground, and the caravan is once more in motion.

Whenever we met these unfortunate tea-porters, they were obliged to stop and lean against the mountain, so as to afford us a free passage. As our palanquin approached, they lifted up their heads and cast on us a furtive and painfully stupid look. And this, said we sadly, is what civilisation, when corrupt and without religious faith, is able to make of man created in the image of God—of man who has been "made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour." The words of the prophet, in which he raises so high the dignity of man, recurred involuntarily to our minds; but they sounded like bitter mockery in presence of these poor creatures degraded to the level of beasts of burden.

Brick tea, and the khata, or "scarf of felicity," are the great articles of trade between China and Thibet. It is scarcely credible what a prodigious quantity of these goods is exported annually from the provinces of *Kan-Sou* and *Sse-tchouen*. These are certainly not absolute necessaries of life; but they are so connected with the habits and wants of the Thibetans, that they cannot now do without them, and they have thus rendered themselves voluntary tributaries of that Chinese Empire, whose yoke weighs so heavily upon them. They might live in freedom and independence in the midst of their mountains, and care nothing about the Chinese, if they could only make up their minds to go without brick tea and scarfs of felicity. But this they will probably not do, for factitious wants are those which weigh most heavily upon us, and from which we have most difficulty in freeing ourselves.

After crossing the famous Fey-yué-ling, which rises on the frontiers of the Central Empire like an advanced post of the mountains of Thibet, we found ourselves once more in China, with its beautiful landscapes, its towns and villages and numerous popula-

tion; the temperature rose rapidly, and soon the Thibetan horses, which had borne the Chinese soldiers from the garrison of Lha-ssa, became so overcome by the heat that they went along with outstretched necks, flapping ears, and open panting mouths. Several could not endure the change, and died on the road; at which the Chinese soldiers, who had reckoned on selling them for a good price in their own country, became furious, and vented their wrath in imprecations on Thibet and all that it contained.

A little while before we arrived at *Tsing-khi-hien*, a town of the third order, the wind began to blow with such violence that our bearers had the greatest difficulty in keeping the palanquins on their shoulders. But when in the midst of this hurricane we entered the town, we were much surprised to find the inhabitants attending quietly to their customary occupations, and to hear from the master of the inn where we alighted, that this was the usual weather in this part of the country. We consulted our Chinese Itinerary on the subject, and there read, in fact, the following words:—

"At Tsing-khi-hien the winds are terrible: every evening there rise furious whirlwinds, which shake the houses and occasion a frightful noise, as if everything was going to pieces." It is probable that these atmospheric disturbances are attributable to the neighbourhood of the Fey-yué-ling and its vast and numerous gorges. Since our departure from Ta-tsien-lou, we had travelled pretty quietly, and without exciting much curiosity amongst the Chinese. But as soon as we had reached the great centre of the population, the sensation we created began to be perceptible.

The estafette who preceded us several stages to announce our arrival, did not fail to blow his trumpet and rouse the inhabitants. The peasants abandoned their field labours, to run and post themselves on the road side to see us pass by. At the entrance of the towns especially, the curious came thronging about us in such numbers that the palanquins could scarcely make their way through the throng. Our bearers vociferated, the soldiers who formed our escort tried to disperse them by dealing out blows right and left with their rattans, and while we advanced, as through the midst of an insurrection, all those thousands of little Chinese eyes were peering into our palanquins with the most eager curiosity. Loud remarks were made, without the smallest ceremony, on the cut of our physiognomies, our beards, noses, eyes, costume,—nothing was forgotten. Some appeared pretty well satisfied with us; but others burst into shouts of laughter, as soon as they caught sight of what seemed to them our burlesque European features. A

magic effect was, however, produced by the yellow cap and red sash; those who first discovered them, pointed them out to their neighbours with evident amazement, and their faces immediately assumed a grave and severe expression. Some said that the Emperor had charged us with an extraordinary mission, and that he had himself bestowed on us these Imperial decorations. Others were of opinion that we were European spies who had been arrested in Thibet, and that we were to be tried as a preparatory ceremony to that of having our heads cut off. These various opinions which we heard expressed all round us, were sometimes amusing, but more frequently, it must be owned, vexatious.

At *Ya-tcheou*, a fine town of the second order, where we stopped after leaving Tsing-khi-hien, there was a real insurrection on our account. The inn where we were lodged, possessed a large and handsome courtyard, round which were ranged the chambers destined to travellers; and as soon as we were installed in those prepared for us, our visitors began to arrive in such crowds that the tumult soon became deafening. As we had rather more desire to rest than to present ourselves as a spectacle for the amusement of the public, we endeavoured to turn them out of doors; and one of us advancing to the threshold of our chambers, addressed to the multitude a few words accompanied by energetic and imperious gestures, which had a complete and instantaneous success. The crowd appeared to be suddenly seized by panic terror, and set off as hard as they could run; and no sooner was the courtyard clear than we had the great gate locked for fear of a second invasion.

But little by little the tumult began again in the street. A sort of murmur was heard among the crowd, and then the noise burst out again as loud as ever. The worthy Chinese were determined to gratify themselves with a sight of the Europeans. They began to knock loudly and repeatedly at our great gate, and at last by dint of violent shaking burst it in, and the living torrent rushed again with impetuosity into the courtyard.

The matter was now becoming serious, and it was evidently important to let them see who was master. By a sudden inspiration we seized a long and thick bamboo, which happened to be lying near the door of the room, and the poor Chinese, imagining no doubt that we intended to knock them down with it, tumbled over each other in their haste to get away. We then ran to the door of the room occupied by our mandarin conductor, who, not knowing what to do in the riot, had bethought himself of the safe expedient of hiding himself. But as soon as we had found him, without giving him time to speak, or even to think, we seized him by the

arm, clapped on his head his official hat, and dragged him along as fast as we could run to the gate of the inn. Then we thrust into his hands the great bamboo with which we had armed ourselves, and enjoined him to stand sentinel. "If," said we, "a single individual passes that gate, you are a lost man;" and hearing us talk in this grand style, the poor man took it seriously and did not dare to stir. The people in the street burst out laughing; for it was something new to see a military mandarin mounting guard with a long bamboo at the door of an inn. Everything remained perfectly quiet up to the time of our going to bed; the guard was then relieved, and our warrior laid down his arms and returned to his room, to console himself by smoking some pipes of tobacco.

Those who do not know the Chinese, will doubtless be scandalised at our behaviour, and will blame us severely. They will ask, what right had we to make this mandarin ridiculous, and expose him to the laughter of the people. The right, we answer, that every man has to provide for his personal safety. This triumph, absurd as it seems, gave us great moral power, and we had need of it, in order to arrive safe and sound at the end of our journey. It would be childish or insane to talk of reasoning and acting in China as you would in Europe; the circumstance just related is a trifle, but we shall find much stronger instances in the course of our narrative.

Our departure from Ya-tcheou was almost imposing. Our demonstration of the evening before had raised us so high in public opinion, that we had not to encounter on our passage the slightest inconvenience. The streets were thronged with people; but their behaviour was civil, almost respectful. They stood aside quietly, to let our palanquins pass, and everybody appeared to be earnestly engaged in the study of our physiognomy, which we endeavoured as far as possible to render extremely majestic, and quite in accordance with the "*rites*."

It was the month of June—the finest season for the province of *Sse-tchouen*. The country we were traversing was rich and admirably varied by hills, plains, and valleys, watered by streams of enchanting freshness. The country was in all its splendour, harvests were ripening all around, the trees were loaded with flowers and fruit, and the exquisite perfume of the air reminded us that we were passing through plantations of lemon and orange trees.

In the fields and on all the paths we found the industrious population of China, constantly busied in trade and agriculture; villages with their curve-roofed pagodas, farms surrounded by thickets of bamboo and banana, inns and houses of refreshment

at short intervals along the roads, small tradesmen selling to travellers fruit, fragments of sugar cane, pastry made with cocoa-nut oil, soups, rice, wine, tea, and an infinity of Chinese dainties. All this brought back vividly the recollection of our former travels in the Celestial Empire; but perhaps the strongest reminiscence was afforded by the powerful odour of musk, with which China and the Chinese are everywhere so much impregnated.

Travellers in remote countries have often remarked, that most nations have an odour which is peculiar to them. It is easy to distinguish the negro, the Malay, the Tatar, the Thibetan, the Hindoo, the Arab, and the Chinese. The country itself even, the soil on which they dwell, diffuses an analogous exhalation, which is especially observable in the morning, in passing either through town or country; but a new comer is much more sensible of it than an old resident, as the sense of smell becomes gradually so accustomed to it as no longer to perceive it.

The Chinese say they perceive also a peculiar odour in a European, but one less powerful than that of the other nations with whom they come in contact. It is remarkable, however, that in traversing the various provinces of China, we were never recognised by any one except by the dogs, which barked continually at us, and appeared to know that we were foreigners. We had indeed completely the appearance of true Chinese, and only an extremely delicate scent could discover that we did not really belong to the "central nation."

We noticed on our way a great number of monuments of a kind peculiar to China, and which alone would suffice to distinguish this country from all others; namely, triumphal arches erected to widowhood or virginity. When a girl will not marry, in order that she may better devote herself to the service of her parents, or if a widow refuses to enter the marriage state a second time, out of respect to the memory of her deceased husband, she is honoured after death with especial pomp. Subscriptions are raised for the erection of a monument to her virtue, to which all the relations, and even sometimes the inhabitants of the village or district where the heroine has dwelt, contribute. These arches are of wood or stone, covered with sculptures, sometimes very well executed, of flowers, birds, and fabulous animals. Many of the ornaments and fanciful mouldings would do no discredit to the artist who decorated our finest cathedrals. On the front is usually an inscription in honour of virginity or widowhood, as the case may be; and on the two sides are engraved in small letters the virtue of the heroine in question. These arches, which have a very fine effect,

are frequent along the roads, and even in the towns. At Ning-Po, a celebrated sea-port in the province of *Tche-Kiang*, there is a long street entirely composed of such monuments, all of stone, and of a most rich and majestic architecture. The beauty of the sculptures has excited the admiration of all Europeans who have seen them; in 1842, when the English took the town, there was some talk of their carrying off these triumphal arches, and making with them a complete Chinese street in London. Such an enterprise would have been worthy of British eccentricity, but whether from fear of irritating the people of Ning-Po, or from any other motive, the project was abandoned.

After two days' march through this populous country, we seemed to have quite recovered our former familiarity with it. China entered into us at every pore, and our Tatar and Thibetan impressions gradually faded away. At *Khioung-tcheou*, a town of the second order and pleasantly situated, the inhabitants appeared to be living in the greatest abundance. We were not, as on former occasions, lodged in a public inn, but at a small palace decorated with great richness and elegance, and where we had only to do with people of exquisite politeness, most strict observers of the *rites* or Chinese etiquette. On our arrival, several mandarins came to receive us at the door, and introduced us into a brilliant saloon, in which we found a luxurious and elegantly served collation. Hotels of this kind are called *koung-kouans*, or communal palaces; they are found from stage to stage all along the road, and are reserved for the use of the great mandarins, when travelling on public service. Ordinary travellers are rigidly excluded from them. A Chinese family has the office of maintaining each of them in good order, and of making the necessary arrangements when a mandarin is about to occupy it. The expenses are paid by the governor of the town, and he appoints the domestics for the service of the palace. The koung-kouans of the province of Sse-tchouen are particularly renowned for this magnificence, and they were completely renewed under the administration of Ki-Chan, who was governor of the province for several years, and whose actions all bear the stamp of his noble and generous character.

We were somewhat astonished at first, to find ourselves lodged in this lordly abode, where a splendid banquet was served up to us, and where we were waited on by domestics in rich silk attire.

We talked a good deal with the mandarins of the town, who had the courtesy to come and visit us; and the result of these conversations was the clear conviction that we had been completely the dupes of the little Mussulman mandarin — the chief of our escort.

According to the orders of Ki-Chan, which had been forwarded in writing to the chief tribunal of Ta-tsien-lou, we were to be lodged every day in the communal palaces, and treated in all things like mandarins of the first degree. In regulating matters thus, Ki-Chan had doubtless, in the first instance, followed the impulse of his own generosity; but besides this, he had also probably, from a very excusable patriotic pride, wished to give us strangers a high idea of the grandeur of his country; he had wished that we should be able to say that we had been received in China with brilliant hospitality. But Ki-Chan had reckoned without his little Mussulman, who did not particularly care about making the Empire and the Mantchou dynasty shine in the eyes of the two strangers, and who had some little views of his own, connected with our commissariat department. He had an understanding with the courier, who preceded us always by a day's journey, and who declared to the mandarins of all the towns we passed through, that we had absolutely refused to be lodged in the koung-kouans from some caprice common among the men of our nation, who never could be got to conform to the customs of the Central Empire. He requested, therefore, that they would let him have the orders for our reception at the various palaces, and he would then undertake to provide for us in a manner more suitable to our tastes and wishes. The mandarins and the keepers of the koung-kouan were, on their side, of course not unwilling to comply with a request that would save them all anxiety and trouble; and if our peculiar tastes led us to prefer lodging at poor inns and living on rice and water, salt herbs and bacon, if wine was too heating and injurious to our Western stomachs, and that we found very poor weak tea agree with us better, they of course could have no objection.

In this manner our cunning little Mussulman found means to maintain us for about a tenth of the sum allowed him for the purpose, and quietly to pocket the balance. This discovery was of the greatest importance to us; for it made us acquainted both with the extent of our rights, and the value of the individual to whose care we had been confided.

When we were about to retire to rest, our attention was attracted by the behaviour of some of the keepers of the palace, who kept hovering about us in what seemed a very mysterious manner. Presently they addressed to us a few words, insignificant enough in themselves, but which expressed their desire to enter into communication with us. At length one of them, after having looked well on all sides, to make sure that he was not perceived, came

after us into our room, shut the door, and then kneeling down, made the sign of the cross and asked our blessing. He was a Christian. Soon there came a second and a third, and at last the whole family which had the care of the koung-kouan was assembled round us. They were all Christians; but during the whole day they had not, for fear of compromising themselves before the mandarins, been able to make any demonstration to that effect.

It is impossible to form any idea of the emotions this incident awakened in our minds! The present writer cannot now, after the lapse of six years, recall it without feeling his heart beat quicker, and the tears rush into his eyes.

These men were entirely unknown to us, yet we felt immediately towards them like brothers and friends. Their thoughts and feelings were in harmony with ours; we could speak to them with open hearts, for we were closely united by the bonds of faith, hope, and charity. This inestimable happiness of finding brothers everywhere is only for Catholics. They alone can traverse the earth from north to south, and from east to west, and feel secure of finding everywhere some member of the great family.

There is much talk of universal fraternity; but let those who have it in their hearts, and not merely on their lips, exert themselves in the beautiful work of the propagation of the faith.

On the day before our departure we received a great number of visitors, all belonging to the highest society of Khioung-tcheou. Whilst we resided at the mission we had been mostly in communication with the lower classes; in the country with peasants, in the town with artizans, for in China, as everywhere else, it is among the people that Christianity first strikes root. We were happy therefore to have this opportunity of forming an acquaintance with the higher classes of this curious nation. The well bred Chinese are very pleasing in their manners. Their politeness is not fatiguing and tiresome as is sometimes supposed, but has really something fascinating in it, and only falls into affectation with the pretenders to elegance, who know little of refined society. Their conversation is sometimes even intelligent and witty, and though the compliments and elaborate eulogistic speeches they make one another, are somewhat wearisome at first, you soon become in some measure reconciled to them, by the grace with which they are uttered. There was especially a group of young men amongst our visitors, who excited our admiration; their behaviour was modest, though unconstrained, showing a mixture of timidity and confidence which suited their age perfectly. They spoke little, and only when they were first spoken to, but showed

their interest in the conversation by the animation of their faces and their graceful gestures. Their fans too were managed by our guests with so much elegance and dexterity, that they were quite becoming. Of course we also had on our best manners, in order to show that French urbanity was not inferior to the ceremonious politeness of China.

When we set off again we remarked that our escort was much more numerous than usual. Our palanquins proceeded between a double line of lancers on horseback, whom it appeared the governor of Khioung-tcheou had given us to protect us from robbers. These robbers were the smugglers of opium, and we were informed that for several years past they had come in great numbers to the province of *Yun-nan*, and even as far as Birmah, to fetch the opium sent to them from India. They came back with their contraband goods quite openly, but armed to the teeth, in order to be able to defy the mandarins who might oppose their passage. Instances were mentioned to us of murderous combats, in which both sides had fought desperately, the one to keep, the other to get, the smuggled goods; for Chinese soldiers are only valiant against robbers and smugglers when they hope to get possession of the booty themselves. When these armed bands of opium traders meet any rich travellers on the road, they seldom fail to do a little more business by attacking and plundering them.

Every body is aware of the unfortunate passion of the Chinese for opium, and of the war this fatal drug occasioned in 1840, between China and England. Its importance in the Celestial Empire is of rather recent date, but there is no trade in the world the progress of which has been so rapid. Two agents of the East India Company were the first who, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, conceived the deplorable thought of sending to China the opium of Bengal. Colonel Watson and Vice-President Wheeler are the persons to whom the Chinese are indebted for this new system of poisoning. History has preserved the name of Parmentier*; why should it not also those of these two men? Whoever has done either great good or great harm to mankind ought to be remembered, to excite either gratitude or indignation.

At present China purchases annually of the English opium of the amount of seven millions sterling; the traffic is contraband, but it is carried on along the whole coast of the Empire, and

* A distinguished French chemist, who introduced the culture of the potato into France, after the famine of 1769. — Trans.

especially in the neighbourhood of the five ports which have been opened to Europeans. Large fine vessels, armed like ships of war, serve as dépôts to the English merchants, and the trade is protected, not only by the English government, but also by the mandarins of the Celestial Empire. The law which forbids the smoking of opium under pain of death, has indeed never been repealed; but everybody smokes away quite at his ease notwithstanding. Pipes, lamps, and all the apparatus for smoking opium, are sold publicly in every town, and the mandarins themselves are the first to violate the law and give this bad example to the people, even in the courts of justice. During the whole of our long journey through China, we met with but one tribunal where opium was not smoked openly, and with impunity.

Opium is not smoked in the same manner as tobacco. The pipe is a tube of nearly the length and thickness of an ordinary flute. Towards one end of it is fitted a bowl of baked clay or some other material, more or less precious, which is pierced with a hole communicating with the interior of the tube. The opium, which before smoking is in the form of a blackish viscous paste, is prepared in the following manner:—A portion, of the size of a pea, is put on a needle, and heated over a lamp until it swells and acquires the requisite consistence. It is then placed over the hole in the bowl of the pipe, in the form of a little cone that has been previously pierced with a needle so as to communicate with the interior of the tube. The opium is then brought to the flame of the lamp, and after three or four inspirations the little cone is entirely burnt and all the smoke passes into the mouth of the smoker, who then rejects it again through his nostrils. Afterwards the same operation is repeated, so that this mode of smoking is extremely tedious. The Chinese prepare and smoke their opium lying down, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, saying that this is the most favourable position; and the smokers of distinction do not give themselves all the trouble of the operation, but have their pipes prepared for them.

At Canton, at Macao, and at other ports open to European commerce, we have heard people attempt to justify the trade in opium, by the assertion that its effects were not so bad as was supposed; and that, as with fermented liquors and many other substances, the abuse only was injurious. A moderate use of opium, it was said, was rather beneficial to the feeble and lymphatic Chinese. Those who speak thus, however, are commonly dealers in opium, and it is easy to suppose that they seek by all possible arguments to quiet their consciences, which can

hardly fail to tell them they are committing a bad action. But the spirit of trade and the thirst of gold completely blind these men, who with this exception are generous in their conduct, keep their purses always open to the unfortunate, and are prompt in every good work. These rich speculators live habitually in the midst of gaiety and splendour, and think little of the frightful consequences of their detestable traffic. When from their superb palace-like mansions on the sea shore, they see their beautiful vessels returning from the Indies, gliding majestically over the waves, and entering with all their sails spread into the port, they do not reflect that the cargoes borne in those superb clippers are bringing ruin and desolation to numbers of families. With the exception of some rare smokers who, thanks to a quite exceptional organisation, are able to restrain themselves within the bounds of moderation, all others advance rapidly towards death, after having passed through the successive stages of idleness, debauchery, poverty, the ruin of their physical strength, and the complete prostration of their intellectual and moral faculties. Nothing can stop a smoker who has made much progress in this habit; incapable of attending to any kind of business, insensible to every event—the most hideous poverty, and the sight of a family plunged into despair and misery—cannot rouse him to the smallest exertion, so complete is the disgusting apathy in which he is sunk.

For several years past, some of the southern provinces have been actively engaged in the cultivation of the poppy and the fabrication of opium. The English merchants confess that the Chinese product is of excellent quality, though inferior to that of Bengal; but the English opium suffers so much adulteration before it reaches the pipe of the smoker, that it is not in reality as good as what the Chinese themselves prepare. The latter, however, though delivered perfectly pure, is sold at a low price, and only consumed by smokers of the lowest class. That of the English, notwithstanding its adulteration, is very dear, and reserved to smokers of distinction; a caprice which can only be accounted for from the vanity of the rich Chinese, who would think it beneath them to smoke tobacco of native production, and not of a ruinous price; that which comes from a long way off, must evidently be preferable.

"*Tutto il mondo è fatto come la nostra famiglia.*"

It may be easily foreseen, however, that this state of things cannot last; and it is probable that the Chinese will soon cultivate

the poppy on a large scale, and make at home all the opium necessary for their consumption. The English cannot possibly offer an equally good article at the same price; and when the fashion at present in their favour shall have altered, they will no longer be able to sustain the competition. When that happens, British India will experience a terrible blow, that may possibly even be felt in the English metropolis, and then, who knows whether the passion of the Chinese for this fatal drug may not decline. It would be by no means surprising if, when they can procure opium easily and at a low price, they should gradually abandon this degrading and murderous habit.

It is said that the people of London, and many of the great manufacturing towns of England, have been for some time addicted to the use of opium, both in its liquid and solid form; but the circumstance has attracted little attention, though the progress of the habit is alarming. Curious and instructive would it be indeed, if we should one day see the English going to buy opium in the ports of China, and their ships bringing back from the Celestial Empire this deleterious stuff, to poison England. Well might we exclaim in such a case, "Leave judgment to God."

After quitting the communal palace of Khioung-tcheou we crossed a magnificent plain, in which we saw the Chinese population displaying all the resources of their agricultural and commercial industry. As we advanced the roads became broader, the villages more numerous, and the houses better built and more elegantly decorated. The short garments worn by the people gave way to long robes of state, and the physiognomies of travellers bore the impress of a higher civilisation. Amongst the peasants with their large straw hats and sandals, appeared a great number of Chinese exquisites, with their lounging and affected deportment, playing continually with their fans, and protecting their pale mealy complexions from the sun with little parasols of varnished paper. Everything announced to us that we were not far off Tching-tou-fou, the capital of the province of Sse-tchouen. Before entering the town our conductor invited us to rest for a short time in a Bonze monastery that we came to on the road. In the mean while, he said he would go himself, according to Chinese ceremonial, to present himself to the viceroy and ask his pleasure respecting us. The superior of the convent came to receive us, with a profusion of salutations, and introduced us into an immense saloon, where a repast was served of tea, dried fruits, pastry of all colours, fried in sesame oil, which the Chinese call *hiang-you;* that is, odoriferous.

Several monks of the monastery assisted their superior in entertaining us, and keeping up the conversation; but we did not perceive among these Bonzes the frankness and sincerity of religious conviction that we had found among the Lamas of Thibet and Tatary. Their manners were full of courtesy indeed, and their long ash-coloured robes irreproachable; but we could not discover many signs of faith or devotion in their sceptical and cunning faces.

This Bonze monastery is one of the richest and best-maintained in China; and after we had taken tea, the superior invited us to go over it. The solidity of the building and the richness of its decoration attracted our attention; but we admired especially the gardens, groves, and park by which it is surrounded. Nothing fresher or prettier can be imagined. We stopped for some moments on the borders of a large fish-pond, where great numbers of turtle were sporting amidst the broad leaves of the water-lily which floated on the surface of the water. Another pond, smaller than the first, was full of black and red fish; and a young Bonze, whose great ears stuck out comically on each side of his newly shaven pate, was amusing himself by throwing them little pellets of rice-paste; for which they appeared excessively eager, crowding to the surface and opening their mouths to receive them.

After this delightful walk, we were taken to the reception-room of the monastery, where we found several visitors, and amongst them a young man of lively, easy manners, and remarkable volubility of tongue, whom, before he had spoken many words, we discovered to be a Christian. "You are undoubtedly," said we to him, "of the religion of the Lord of Heaven?" For an answer he threw himself on his knees before us and asked our blessing. Such an act, in the presence of the Bonzes and of a crowd of curious persons, indicated both a lively faith and great courage; and in fact he was a man of very strong mind. He began, without the smallest hesitation, to speak of the numerous Christians in the capital, of the quarters of the town in which there were most, and of the happiness it was to him to have met us; he then made a bold attack upon paganism and pagans, defended the doctrines and practices of Christianity, appealed to the Bonzes themselves, rallied them on their idols and superstitions, and summed up with an estimate of the value of the theological books of Confucius, *Lao-tze*, and Buddha. It was a flood of words that seemed as if it would never stop; the Bonzes were disconcerted at such an impetuous attack; the spectators laughed and looked pleased; and we could not, on our side, help being quite proud of seeing a

Chinese Christian proclaiming and defending his faith in public. It was a thing as rare as it was delightful.

During the long monologue of our Christian orator there was frequent mention made of a French embassy that had arrived at Canton, and of a certain great personage named *La-ko-nie**, who in concert with the Imperial Commissioner *Ky-yn*, had arranged the affairs of the Christians in China. In future it was said there were to be no more persecutions of them; the Emperor approved their doctrine, and took them under his protection, &c. &c.

We did not place any great reliance upon all that, but we endeavoured to make out what it really meant. Having, however, few data to proceed upon, we did not succeed in unravelling all these enigmas; and just as we were about to ask more precise explanations from our fluent orator, four Mandarins who had arrived from the capital, invited us to enter our palanquins and resume our journey.

The bearers carried us at a run and without stopping to take breath, as far as the walls of the town, where we found the soldiers of our escort awaiting us. The precaution was by no means unnecessary, for without this help it would have been impossible for us to get through the streets, so compact and dense was the throng that impeded our passage. Our hearts beat somewhat quicker than usual, for we knew that we were about to be brought to trial by order of the Emperor.

Were we to be sent to Pekin, to Canton, or to another world? There had been nothing to alarm us hitherto; but in the absolute uncertainty of what we had to expect, it was pardonable that we should experience a little emotion.

At length we arrived in front of a great tribunal, on the massive portals of which were painted two monstrous divinities armed with great swords. The two enormous folding-doors were thrown open, and we entered, not without a thought of in what manner we were to go out again.

From Ta-tsein-lou, the frontier town† to Tching-tou-fou the capital of Sse-tchouen, we had made twelve days' march, and had traversed nearly a thousand *li*, equivalent to about three hundred English miles.

* The Chinese name of M. de Lagrenée. This French embassy had arrived during our long journeys through Tatary, and this was the first time we had heard it mentioned.

† *Fou* signifies in China, a town of the first order; *tcheou*, of the second; *tsien*, of the third: these three orders of towns are always enclosed by ramparts.

CHAP. II.

Conversation with the Prefect of the Garden of Flowers. — Lodgings in the Court of Justice. — Invitation to Dinner with the two Prefects of the Town. — Conversation with two Persons of Distinction. — Two Mandarins of Honour assigned to amuse us. — Solemn Judgment before the assembled Tribunals. — Various Incidents of the Trial. — Report addressed to the Emperor concerning us, and the Emperor's Answer. — Imperial Edicts in favour of Christians, obtained by the French Embassy in China. — Insufficiency of these Edicts. — Appearance before the Viceroy. — Portrait of this Personage. — Despatch of the Viceroy to the Emperor. — Conversation with the Viceroy.

The capital of the province of Sse-tchouen is divided into three prefectures, charged with the police and administrative duties for the whole town. Every prefect has a tribunal palace, where he judges the affairs of his own jurisdiction; and there he dwells with his family, his counsellors, scribes, satellites, and his numerous domestics. The prefectural tribunal unto which we were now introduced, is called *Hoa-yuen*, that is to say, the Garden of Flowers; and it was therefore with this flowery prefect that we had first to do. He was a Mandarin of about forty years of age, short, broad, and round; his face was like a great ball of fat, his nose buried and his eyes eclipsed, so that he seemed to have only two little slits to look through.

When he entered the apartment in which we were awaiting his pleasure, he found us reading some sentences in Mantchou with which the walls were decorated, and asked us in a very affable manner whether we understood that language. We answered that we had studied it a little, and at the same time we endeavoured to translate into Chinese the Mantchou distich that we had before us, which signified: —

> "If you are in solitude, be careful to meditate on your own faults.
> If you are conversing with men, be careful not to speak of the faults of your neighbours."

The prefect of the Garden of Flowers, being by birth a Mantchou Tatar, was at first astonished, and then extremely flattered, to find that we understood the language of his country, that of the conquerors of China, and of the Imperial family. His funny little squeezed up eyes twinkled with pleasure, and he made us sit down on a red satin divan and talk to him. The conversation had no relation to our affairs. We spoke of literature, of geography, of

the winds, of snows, of barbarous countries and civilised countries. He asked us many particulars concerning our manner of travelling from Ta-tsein-lou, whether it was true that as far as Khioung-tcheou we had been lodged in public inns, &c., and after strongly inveighing against our Mussulman Mandarin, announced to us that he was going to have us conducted to the house appointed for our residence.

At the door of the prefecture we found, not our travelling palanquins, but others, larger, more convenient and more elegant; and our attendants also had been changed.

The dwelling assigned to us was at a considerable distance, and it was necessary, in order to reach it, to traverse the principal districts of the town. At last we reached a tribunal of the second class, where resides a Mandarin, whose office a good deal resembles that of the *Juge de Paix*, in France. We shall have occasion in the sequel to say more of this Mandarin and his family. After having exchanged a few polite phrases with the master of the house, we were installed in our apartments, which were composed of a sleeping-room, and a saloon for receiving visitors, for each of us; but besides this the whole tribunal with all its courts and gardens, and a charming *belvédere* that overlooked the town, and whence the view extended far into the country, were placed at our disposal.

The night had long closed in; and we were left to ourselves, with leisure to meditate on the singularity of our position. What a drama had our existence been for the last two years! Our peaceable departure from the Valley of Black Waters *, with Sandad-chiemba, our camels, and our blue tent; our encampments and our patriarchal life in the grassy wastes of Tatary; the famous Lama monastery of Kounboom, and our long intercourse with the religious Buddhists; the great caravan of Thibet, the horrors and sufferings of that terrible journey through the deserts of High Asia; our abode at Lha-ssa; and those three frightful months during which we had to climb mountains of snow and ice and scale precipices; all these events, all these recollections came crowding upon us at once so as almost to take away our senses. And all was not yet over: we were now, we thought alone, in the hands of the Chinese, without protection, helpless and friendless. But we were wrong; we had God for a friend and protector. There are certain situations in life when, if we lose our trust in God, we must fall into despair: but when we place our whole reliance upon

* See "Recollections of a Journey," &c.

Him, we become inspired with indomitable courage. The Almighty, we said, many times has saved our lives in the most miraculous manner in Tatary and Thibet; it is not likely He would do that, to allow a Chinese afterwards to dispose of us at his pleasure; and we concluded that we might make ourselves perfectly easy, and allow our little affairs to be disposed of as best pleased his providence. The night was far advanced; we said our prayers, which, strictly speaking, might have been the morning ones, and then we lay down in peace.

On the following morning there was brought to us from the prefect a large sheet of red paper, which proved to be an invitation to dinner; and when the hour had arrived, we once more entered our palanquins and were carried to his house.

The tribunals of the Mandarins have seldom anything very remarkable about them in an architectural point of view; the edifice is always low, consisting of only one floor; and the roof, which is loaded with ornaments and little flags, alone indicates its public character. It is always surrounded by a great wall, almost as high as the building itself. Within this enclosure you see vast courts and halls, and often gardens, which are by no means unattractive; but the only thing which bears the stamp of grandeur is a series of four or five stately portals placed in the same direction, and separating the different courts. These portals are ornamented with grand historical or mythological figures, coarsely painted but always with very striking colours. When all these great folding-doors are opened in succession with great noise, and display, at the extremity of this grand corridor, the hall where the judge is administering, or rather selling, justice, the effect on the imagination of a Chinese must be very striking.

On a raised platform in this last hall is placed a large table covered with red cloth, and on the two sides of the apartment are seen all kinds of weapons and instruments suspended to the walls. The Mandarin is seated behind the table, the scribes, counsellors, and subaltern officers standing round him. Below the platform is the place reserved for the public, as well as for the accused, and for the functionaries whose business it is to torture the unfortunate victims of Chinese justice. Behind this hall of audience are the private apartments of the Mandarin and his family.

Very often the tribunal is used also for a prison, and the condemned cells are placed in the first court. We saw here, when we entered, a crowd of unfortunate criminals, with livid faces and wasted limbs, scarcely covered by a few rags. They were crouching in the sunshine: some had on their shoulders an enormous

cangue, a sort of moveable pillory ; others were loaded with chains, and some had only fetters on their hands and feet.

The prefect of the Garden of Flowers did not make us wait long. As soon as we had entered, he presented himself, and introduced us to the dining-room, where we found a fourth guest the prefect of the third district of the town. A single glance served to recognise in him the type of the true Chinese. He was of middling height and sufficiently plump. His features were more delicate than those of his Mantchou Tatar colleague, but inferior in penetration and intelligence ; his eyes were suspicious in their expression, and not so much arch as wicked.

We were seated at a square table, missionary opposite to missionary, and prefect to prefect; and, according to Chinese custom, the dinner began with the dessert. We amused ourselves a long while with the fruit and preserves, and our little glasses were kept continually filled with warm wine. The conversation was supposed to be quite free and easy ; but we were not long in perceiving that our two magistrates were trying to subject us to an examination, without our perceiving it. This they found no very easy matter. We had been invited to dinner, and so we intended to dine in peace and as gaily as possible : and we were therefore obstinately and maliciously bent on never going the way they wanted to drive us ; and when they thought they had just got us, we suddenly slipped aside, and made an innocent inquiry about the rice harvest, or the number of dynasties counted in the Chinese monarchy. What especially annoyed them was that sometimes we involuntarily fell into speaking French between ourselves, and then they glanced at us and each other with such eager anxiety, that they seemed to be trying to seize with their eyes the meaning that escaped their ears. The dinner passed, therefore in a very amusing manner ; and as it had begun with the dessert, it may be considered to have been quite in order that it ended with the soup.

We then rose from table : every one took his pipe, and tea was served. The Mantchou prefect left us for a moment, but soon returned, carrying a European book and a packet. He presented the book to us, and asked us whether we were acquainted with it. It was an old breviary.

"This is a Christian book," said we, "a prayer-book ; how comes it here?" "I have lived a good deal amongst Christians," was the reply ; "and one of them made me a present of it."

We looked at one another and smiled ; that was rather more polite than saying, "You lie." "Here again," he went on, "this

was given me too;" and he opened an old piece of silk stuff, in which the packet was wrapped, and displayed a beautiful crucifix. The two prefects must have observed the emotion we felt at the sight of what were to us such memorable relics; for on turning over the breviary we had read on the first page the name Monseigneur Dufraisse, Bishop of Tabraca and Vicar Apostolic of the province of Sse-tchouen. This holy and courageous bishop had suffered martyrdom in the year 1815, in the town of Tching-tou-fou; perhaps he had been condemned and put to the torture in the very tribunal where we were now standing.

"These articles," said we to the Mandarins, "belonged to a Frenchman who was a chief of the Christian religion, and whom you put to death in this very town, thirty years ago. This man was a saint, and you killed him like a malefactor." Our Mandarins appeared astonished and confounded at hearing us speak of an event that took place so long ago; and after a moment's silence, one of them asked who could have deceived us by relating so extraordinary a fable. "Probably," he added, smiling, and in a careless tone, "they were only joking with you."

"No," said we, "there is not much to joke about in this business. It is known to all the nations in the West that you have tortured and strangled a great number of Christian missionaries. Only a few years ago, you put to death another Frenchman, one of our brothers, at *Ou-chang-fou*."* The two representatives of Chinese justice protested aloud, stamped with their feet, and maintained, with indescribable impudence, that our information was false. This was, of course, not the moment to insist upon its accuracy; and we, therefore, contented ourselves with begging the prefect of the Garden of Flowers to make us a present of the breviary and the crucifix. But our entreaties failed of success. This curious personage endeavoured to make us believe that he was keeping these things for a dear friend of his, who was a Christian, and that to part with them would be to violate all the *rites* of honour and friendship; and thereupon he began to speak to us of the numerous Christians existing in the province of Sse-tchouen, and to give us some interesting details concerning them.

We had been aware that the Chinese Mandarins were not ignorant of the progress of Christianity in their country; that they knew the localities in which neophytes were to be found, and that even the presence of numerous missionaries was no mystery

* The venerable Perboyre, missionary of the congregation of St. Lazare; martyred in 1840, at Ou-chang-fou, the capital of the province of *Hou-pé*.

to them; we had supposed that the Christians, cautious as they are, would scarcely have been able to elude completely the vigilance of the Chinese police, that even the times and places of their meetings were well enough known; but we did not think that the Mandarins were quite as intimately acquainted with their affairs as we discovered them to be.

At Lha-ssa the ambassador Ki-Chan had informed us, that in the province of Sse-tchouen we should find many converts, and he even indicated the places where they were to be met with in the greatest numbers. During the time when he was viceroy of that province, he had discovered that the environs of his own palace were almost entirely inhabited by Christians, and he could even sometimes hear the sound of their hymns, when they were singing on their festival days. "I know too," he had added, "that the chief of all the Christians in the province* is named *Ma*. I know the house where he lives; every year he sends to Canton for money and various articles of merchandise; and at a certain time of the year, he goes to visit all the districts where there are Christians. I never disturbed him, because I have been assured that he is a virtuous and charitable man."

It is evident from this, that if the Chinese wished to seize on all the Christians and missionaries, it would be no difficult matter; but the Mandarins will not proceed to that extremity, for if they did they would find themselves overwhelmed with business that would bring them no kind of profit, and they might even be exposed to be degraded and sent to exile. The Emperor, and the great tribunals at Pekin, would not fail to accuse them of negligence, and call them to account for not having sooner been aware of what was passing in their Mandarinates, and causing the laws of the Empire to be put in force.

Thus the personal interest of the magistrates is often, for the Christians, the strongest guarantee of peace and tranquillity.

The hour having come in which the prefect of the Garden of Flowers had to administer justice, we took our leave. The worthy Mantchou had had the complaisance to treat us to an excellent dinner, and we were grateful to him accordingly; but we did not mean to carry our gratitude so far as to give him the information he wanted, and which he had hoped to obtain; so after having addressed each other reciprocally with all sorts of salutations, and exhausted all the formulas of Chinese politeness, we returned home.

* Mgr. Perocheau, Bishop of Maxula.

During our absence our house had been set in order, by command of the viceroy. Two clever and well-behaved young men had been appointed to be our *valets de chambre*, and to two Mandarins of the lower class of the "Gilt Copper Ball," had been assigned the office of keeping us company, dissipating our *ennui*, and making themselves generally agreeable by the charms of their conversation. One of them, a most prodigious gabbler, was, though young, quite decrepit from the immoderate use of opium. The other was really old, and constantly coughing and uttering great sighs, probably for the vanished joys of his youth. The first occupied himself from morning till night with his pipe and his opium-lamp; the other sat crouched in a corner, picking out seeds of the water-melon with his long nails, his little withered hands looking exactly like those of an old monkey. He ate a prodigious quantity of these seeds, and moistened them with copious libations of tea, saying that only this kind of diet suited the delicacy of his temperament.

It may be supposed that the conversational talents of our two companions were not of the most brilliant order; in fact, the utmost they could do for us was to make us regret the somewhat rough and rude manners of our Tatar friends; but fortunately we had, from time to time, some visitors of distinction, whose refined and elegant deportment served to remind us that we were in the capital of the most civilised province perhaps of the Celestial Empire.

Four days after our arrival at Tching-tou-fou it was signified to us, at an early hour in the morning, that the documents relating to us having been sufficiently studied, we were to be brought to trial. This news, as may well be supposed, was to us matter of great interest.

A trial in China, and by order of the Emperor, was no trifle. Many of our now happy predecessors had only entered the tribunals to be tortured, and left them to suffer glorious martyrdom. This day, then, was to be decisive of our fate, and to put an end to all anxieties concerning the future, which for us had been so long enveloped in darkness.

Our position was not, however, the same as that of the greater part of the missionaries who had had to appear before the Mandarins. We had not been arrested in the Chinese territory, no Christian of the province had been in any relation with us, no one was at all implicated in our affairs, and we were sure that no one could be compromised on our account.

Samdadchiemba had been the only companion of our fatigues

and privations, the only witness of our desire for the glory of God and the salvation of man. But our dear neophyte was now no longer with us; he was in his own country, and sheltered from all danger. We had only, therefore, to think of ourselves; the Chinese government had only our two heads to strike at, and the question was much simplified. In this quite exceptional situation, we could, with God's help, present ourselves before the court in a serene and equable state of mind.

The general administration of each province is entrusted to two *sse* or commissioners, who have their tribunals in the capital. These are the most important after those of the viceroy. We were conducted to the judgment hall of the first provincial commissioner, who bears the title of *Pou-tching-sse.* His colleague, the *Ngan-tsha-sse*, or Inspector of Crimes, a kind of attorney-general, was associated with the principal Mandarins of the town; for, as we were told, the trial was to be a solemn and extraordinary one.

An immense crowd surrounded the tribunal; amongst this assemblage of the populace, eager to see the faces of the "devils of the Western Sea," were a few sympathetic-looking countenances, which seemed to say, "You are in a very unfortunate position, and we can do nothing for you." The dejection of these poor Christians pained us, and gladly would we have infused into their souls a little of the calmness and peace with which our own were filled. The way was cleared by soldiers armed with bamboos and rattans, the great doors were opened, and we entered. We were placed in a small waiting-room, with the two amiable companions that had been assigned to us, and thence we could amuse ourselves by contemplating the movement and the sensation that reigned in the tribunal. The Mandarins who were to take part in the ceremonial arrived in succession, followed by suites of attendants, who had uncommonly the appearance of gangs of thieves. The satellites ran backwards and forwards in their long red robes, and hideous peaked hats of black felt or iron wire, surmounted by long pheasant's feathers. They were armed with long rusty swords, and carried chains, pincers, and various instruments of torture, of strong and terrible forms. The Mandarins were collected in groups, talking with one another, and interrupting themselves frequently by bursts of laughter; the subaltern officers, scribes, and executioners, went and came, as if to give themselves airs of importance; and every one seemed to anticipate a scene that would be curious and seasoned by unaccustomed emotions.

All this agitation, and these interminable preparations, had in

them something of extravagance and exaggeration; they were evidently intended to frighten us. At length every one had found his place, and the tumult was succeeded by a profound silence. A moment afterwards a terrible cry, uttered by a great number of voices, was heard in the hall of audience; it was repeated three times, and our companions told us that it was on the judges making their solemn entry and installing themselves in their seats. Two officers, decorated with the Crystal Ball, then appeared, and made us a sign to follow them. They came between us, our companions placed themselves behind, and the two accused persons walked thus to judgment.

A great door was then suddenly opened, and we beheld, at a glance, the numerous personages of this Chinese *performance*. Twelve stone steps led up to the vast inclosure where the judges were placed; on each side of this staircase was a line of executioners in red dresses: and when the accused passed tranquilly through their ranks, they all cried out with a loud voice, "Tremble! Tremble!" and rattled their instruments of torture. We were stopped at about the middle of the hall, and then eight officers of the court proclaimed in a chanting voice the customary formula: — "Accused! on your knees! on your knees!" The accused remained silent and motionless. The summons was repeated, but there was still no alteration in their attitude. The two officers with the Crystal Ball, now thought themselves called on to come to our assistance, and pulled our arms to help us to kneel down. But a solemn look and some few emphatic words sufficed to make them let go their hold. They even judged it expedient to retire a little, and keep a respectful distance.

"Every empire," said we, addressing our judges, "has its own customs and manners. When we appeared before the ambassador Ki-Chan at Lha-ssa, we remained standing; and Ki-Chan considered that in doing so we were only acting with reasonable conformity to the customs of our country."

We waited for an answer from the president, but he remained dumb. The other judges contented themselves with looking at us, and communicating among themselves by grimaces. The tribunal had apparently been arranged and decorated expressly for the purpose of giving us a high idea of the majesty of the Empire. The walls were hung with red draperies, on which certain sentences were written in large black characters; gigantic lanterns of the brightest colours were suspended from the ceiling; and behind the seats of the judges were seen the insignia of their dignity, borne by officers in rich silk robes. The hall was surrounded by

a great number of soldiers in uniform and under arms, and along the sides were seated a select number of spectators, who had probably obtained their places through favour and patronage.

The *Pou-tching-sse*, or first provincial commissioner, filled the office of president. He was a man of about fifty years of age, with thick lips of a violet colour, flabby cheeks, a dirty white complexion, a square nose, long flat shining ears, and a forehead deeply wrinkled. His eyes were probably small and red; but they were so hidden behind large spectacles, which were tied in their place with a black string, that this could not positively be ascertained. His costume was superb; on his breast glittered the large Imperial dragon, embroidered in gold and silver; a globe of red coral, the decoration of Mandarins of the first class, surmounted his official cap; and a long perfumed chaplet hung to his neck. The other judges were attired in pretty nearly the same fashion, and they had all more or less genuine Chinese faces, but none of them was comparable to the president. His grand spectacles especially, produced on us an astounding effect, but perhaps not exactly the kind of one he had calculated on. We saw that this man was seeking to impose on us by a display of his dignity. He had made no reply to the observation we had made when we refused to kneel down; he had not even made the slightest gesture, but had remained, ever since we had entered, as motionless as a statue. This somewhat burlesque behaviour lasted long enough to enable us to study quite at our ease the curious society in which we found ourselves, and it was so amusing that we began to gossip together in French, though in a low voice, communicating to each other our little momentary impressions. Had this lasted much longer, it might have ended in upsetting our gravity; but luckily the president made up his mind to break his majestic silence.

In a nasal, squeaking voice he began to speak, asking us of what country we were.

"We are men of the French Empire."

"Why did you quit your noble country to come into the Central Kingdom?"

"To preach to the men of your illustrious Empire the doctrine of the Lord of heaven."

"I have heard say that this doctrine is very sublime."

"That is true; but the men of your nation are endowed with intelligence, and with continued application they may attain to the acquisition of this doctrine."

"You speak the language of Pekin; where have you learnt it?"

"In the north of the Empire; the pronunciation is best there."

"That is true, but where in the north? Who was your master?"

"Every one; we learned a little here, and a little there, by speaking and hearing it spoken."

After these few questions the president called an attendant, and ordered him to bring a little casket, carefully enveloped in skins and sealed in several places with large red seals. He then opened it before us with much solemnity, and showed us what it contained. We recollected then that, when we were at Lha-ssa, and the ambassador Ki-Chan had examined our trunks, he had expressed a wish to keep some articles by way of vouchers, and we had given him some letters, and a few little translations from Tatar and Chinese books. The president now displayed these papers before us, inquiring at the same time whether anything was wanting; and in order to assist us in giving an accurate reply, he furnished us with an exact list, made at Lha-ssa, and signed by Ki-Chan and ourselves. Nothing was missing; and they made us sign a declaration to that effect, drawn up in French and Chinese. We could not but admire the exactness and regularity with which all this was done.

Whilst the president was interrogating us, which he did with apparent good nature and affability, we remarked that the person seated on his right hand, his *Ngan-tcha-sse*, or Inspector of Crimes, a kind of attorney-general, a wrinkled old man with a face like a polecat, who rocked himself about, muttered continually between his teeth, and seemed vexed at the turn the discussion was taking. After finishing the examination of the little casket, the president became again silent and motionless as before, and the malicious public accuser began to speak. He made great use of his opportunity; discoursed with great volubility concerning the majesty of the Celestial Empire, and the inviolability of its territory; reproached us with our audacity, with our vagabondising life about the provinces and among the tributary nations; and then fired off at us a volley of questions, which certainly proved his eager desire to become acquainted with every particular concerning us. He asked who had introduced us to the Empire; with whom we had entered into any relation; whether there were many European missionaries in China, where they lived, what resources they could command for their subsistence; and finally, a crowd of questions that appeared to us exceedingly impertinent. His tone and manner, too, were by no means in accordance with politeness and "the rites;" and it became necessary to give this man a lesson, and moderate his impetuosity. Whilst he was perorating

at a great rate, and allowing his eloquence to overflow into all sorts of subjects, we listened to him with great calmness and patience. When he had finished, we said to him : — " We men of the West, you see, like to discuss matters of business with coolness and method ; but your language has been so diffuse and violent, that we have scarcely been able to make out your meaning. Be so good as to begin again, and express your thoughts more clearly and more peaceably."

These words, pronounced with great slowness and gravity, had all the effect we could have desired ; whispers and significant smiles began to circulate through the assembly, and the judges cast jocose glances at the " Inspector of Crimes," who was evidently quite disconcerted. He wished to resume his speech; but his ideas had become so confused, that he did not seem to know what he had been saying.

We then addressed the president, saying that, as we found nothing but disorder and confusion in the speech of the Inspector of Crimes, we could not possibly reply to it ; and begging that he would himself continue the examination, as " We men of the West admired dignity and precision of language."

These words tickled the vanity of the president; he returned to us our cajolery with interest; and at last inquired who had brought us to China, and with whom we had lodged.

" Our hearts are saddened," we replied, " that we are not able to satisfy you on this point. We will speak to you of ourselves as much as you please; but of those who have been in relation with us, never a word. Our resolution on that point has been long since taken, and there is no human power capable of inducing us to alter it."

" But you must answer! " cried the Inspector of Crimes, gesticulating violently; " you must answer! How else would truth be found in this investigation? "

" The president has questioned us in a noble and authoritative manner, and we have replied to him with simplicity and frankness. As for you, Inspector of Crimes, we have already said that we do not understand you."

The Assessor of the Left here cut short the dispute by giving us a large sheet of paper to examine. It contained nothing but an alphabet of European letters coarsely drawn. Probably it had been obtained in the pillage of some Christian establishment, where young Chinese were being brought up to the ecclesiastical profession.

" Do you know that paper? " asked the Assessor.

"Yes! They are the twenty-four radical signs, with which all the words of our language are constructed."

"Can you read them, and let us hear the sound of them?"

One of us had then the complaisance to repeat solemnly his A B C; and during the time, each of the judges drew from his boot, which in China often serves for a pocket, a copy of the alphabet, in which the pronunciation of every European letter had been given, better or worse, in Chinese characters. It seems that this incident had been concerted and prepared beforehand.

Every judge had his eyes intently fixed upon the paper, and doubtless promised himself to make in this one lesson great progress in a European language. The Assessor of the Left, keeping his eyes and the fore-finger of his right hand fixed on the first letter, and addressing himself to the one of the prisoners who had just said A B C, begged him to repeat the letters slowly, and pause a little on each.

The prisoner, however, making four steps forward, and politely extending his alphabet towards the philological judge, observed: —

"I had thought we came here to submit to trial; but it seems we came to be schoolmasters, and you to be our scholars."

A peal of laughter shook the assembly, in which the solemn president, and even the Inspector of Crimes, took part; and thus terminated their lesson in our language.

It will be observed that this terrible trial had been gradually assuming a less formidable and more amusing aspect. The poor accused persons might at least hope there was now no intention of tearing their flesh with red hot pincers or sticking sharp reeds under their nails. The faces of the executioners assumed a less ferocious expression, and the instruments of torture began to look very much like an idle parade.

The president then asked us, what good it was to the French to come and make Christians in China? what advantage they could hope for from it? "Material advantage? None! France has no need of gold or silver, or of the productions of foreign countries; she makes, on the contrary, enormous sacrifices to them out of pure generosity. She sends you the means of founding schools, she collects your forsaken children, and often feeds your poor in times of famine. But, over and above all this, she sends you the truth. You say that all men are brothers, and this is true; this is why they all ought to worship the same God, He who is the Father of us all. The nations of Europe know the true God, and they come to make him known to you. The happiness which consists in making the truth known and loved, this is the profit sought for by the missionaries who come to you."

The president and the other judges, with the exception always of the Inspector of Crimes, then asked for some information concerning the Christian religion; and this we gave them with the greatest eagerness. At length the president said to us, in a very affable manner, that doubtless we had by this time some need of rest, and that this was enough for to-day. Thereupon the Court rose, we made a profound bow, and the judges departed on their side and we on ours, whilst the soldiers and satellites uttered yells that shook the foundation of the building, this being, it appears, the customary ceremonial on the entrance and departure of the official persons.

This first inquiry had then terminated in a favourable manner; at least, we concluded as much from the congratulations we received, in traversing the halls and courts on our return. The Mandarins of the town, who had attended the trial in order to increase the dignity and splendour of the Court, saluted us in an affected manner, saying that all was well, and that our affairs were going on very prosperously. In the different quarters of the town that we passed through, we met numbers of Christians, whose faces were expanded and beaming with joy, and whom we recognised by their making the sign of the cross as we went by; and glad were we to see confidence and courage reviving in the hearts of these poor people, who had doubtless suffered much from learning that we were in the hands of the deplorable mockery of justice that exists in their country.

Our two Mandarins of honour, who, during the long sitting of the Court had had to remain standing behind us, no doubt also shared in the emotions of the day and the general joy; but they were overcome by fatigue, and as soon as we had reached our abode, they flung themselves with impassioned eagerness, the one on his pipe, the other on his melon seeds. In the evening we received a great number of visitors of distinction, and we endeavoured to find out what there might still be for us to fear or to hope. It was generally agreed that we should be well treated; but that our trial would be greatly protracted, and that in all probability we should have to go to Pekin. Some said that the Emperor himself wished to question us, others thought that the *King-pou*, or grand tribunal of crimes, now sitting at Pekin, would ultimately decide our fate. One thing was certain, namely, that the Emperor had sent a despatch to the viceroy on the subject of our affairs. We asked to see it; but our request was refused, and the Chinese were even scandalised at our audacity in wishing to cast our eyes on what had been written by the "Son of Heaven." The viceroy

alone had read it, and had mentioned something of its contents to his courtiers. A year afterwards, when we were at Macao, we found means to procure the Report that the viceroy had sent to court concerning us, and we found in that a portion of this famous Imperial despatch. The Report begins thus: —

"Report addressed to the Emperor, on the fourth day of the fourth moon of the twenty-sixth year of *Tao-kouang* (1846).

"In virtue of the powers conferred by a supreme decree, Ki-Chan has announced to your Majesty that he has arrested certain strangers from *Fou-lansi* (France); and that he has seized certain foreign books and writings in strange characters. He has added, 'It appears from the declaration of these strangers, that, by way of Canton and other places, they have arrived at the capital (Pekin); that returning thence by *Ching-king* (Moukden, the capital of Mantchuria), they have traversed Mongolia and visited *Si-tsang* (Thibet) with the purpose of preaching their religion.' That after having interrogated these strangers, he has charged a magistrate to conduct them into the province Sse-tchouen, &c. As the aforesaid strangers understand the Chinese language, and can read and write both Mantchou and Mongol, it has not appeared very certain to your Majesty that they really were from France, and your Majesty has forwarded to me a despatch, sealed with the Imperial seal, and enclosing the following orders: — 'When they shall have arrived at Sse-tchouen, inquire with care into all the circumstances of their journey, as well as the names of the places through which they have passed, and endeavour to discover the truth. The moment of their arrival, send to me a copy of the first report, and of their declaration. Have their letters and their books in foreign languages examined, as well as the articles enclosed in the wooden case, and transmit to me, at the same time, all necessary information. I address to you this Imperial order that you may make yourself acquainted with it. Respect this! Respect this!'"

According to this Imperial document, therefore, it appeared that at the court of Pekin they had not quite made up their minds on the subject of our nationality. Since we knew how to read and speak Chinese, Mantchou, and Mongol, the "Son of Heaven" was inclined to think that we were not really Frenchmen, and had charged the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen to clear up this difficulty. Our fate depended on the new information that was to be given to the Emperor, and the opinion of those who supposed we should have to go to Pekin did not seem without foundation. For ourselves, the idea of travelling to Pekin appeared by no means disagreeable;

we had been so tossed about for the last two years, that no change in our itinerary could well put us out of our way. A particular circumstance, too, that had just come to our knowledge, made us think with much pleasure of the chance of seeing the court of Pekin, and finding ourselves face to face with that astonishing monarch who governs "the ten thousand kingdoms, and the four seas which are under heaven."

In returning from the palace of the provincial commissioner, whilst we were crossing a kind of square thronged with curious people, a little packet had been with great adroitness flung into our palanquin, and of course we made haste to conceal it.

In the evening, when we at length found ourselves alone in our chamber, and had not to dread the indiscretion of visitors, we eagerly opened and examined the mysterious missive. It proved to be a long letter from the Chinese priest, charged with the care of the Christians of Tching-tou-fou. It gave us clear and precise information concerning the embassy of M. Lagrenée, and we immediately recognised in him the *La-ko-nie* who had been mentioned to us in so vague a manner by the young Christian we had met in the Bonze convent before entering the town. In communicating to us the memorial and the edicts in favour of the Christians obtained by M. Lagrenée, this missionary warned us that, notwithstanding all these important concessions, the position of the Christians was in reality very little improved ; and that in many localities the persecution was still going on with unabated severity. As very false impressions have been created in France, on the subject of the religious liberty obtained by the embassy sent by M. Guizot to China, we will now enter into a few details with respect to it.

After having concluded a treaty of commerce between France and China, a treaty which was the principal object of the embassy, M. Lagrenée wished before his return to make some attempt to ameliorate the fate of the Chinese Christians and missionaries in these unfortunate countries. He had not, indeed, received from his government any official commission to that effect; and it must be acknowledged it was a very delicate and difficult business to undertake. The representative of the French government might, certainly, protest against the atrocious executions of many of the missionaries; he might require that in future Europeans arrested in the interior should be sent back to one of the free ports, without being subjected to ill-treatment; the English, in their treaty of Nankin, had already carried this equitable measure. But to demand from the Emperor of China the religious liberty

of his own subjects, was rather a more awkward thing; for, in fact, what claim had the nations of Europe to interfere in the government of the Celestial Empire, and dictate to the Emperor the measures he should adopt for the government of his own people? It is evident that the French ambassador who should attempt to negotiate with the Imperial commissioner with this view, would be considered very officious, but not at all official, in his conduct. M. Lagrenée could not possibly demand, in the name of King Louis Philippe, that the Emperor *Tao-kouang* should leave his subjects free to profess the Christian religion.

The opportunity, nevertheless, was a very favourable one. The Chinese were still smarting under the attack of the English, and were perfectly well disposed to promise anything to Europeans, — of course with the mental reservation of breaking their promises whenever it should be found convenient. And that was in fact precisely what took place. After long and earnest entreaties on the part of M. Lagrenée, which are a proof of the interest he took in the cause of the Chinese missions, the Imperial commissioner *Ky-yn* addressed to his Emperor the following memorial.

"Ky-yn, Grand Imperial Commissioner and Viceroy of the two provinces of Kouang-tong and Kouang-si, presents respectfully this memorial.

"After a profound investigation, I have come to the conclusion that the religion of the Lord of heaven*, is that which is venerated and professed by all the nations of the West. Its principal aim is to exhort to good and to repress evil. Formerly under the dynasty of *Ming*, it penetrated into the central Kingdom†, and at that epoch it was not prohibited. Subsequently, as it often happens, there were found among the Chinese who followed the religion, men who abused it to do wrong, and the magistrates sought out and punished the guilty. Their judgments are recorded in the judicial Acts.

"Under the reign of *Kea-king*, a special article of the penal code was promulgated for the punishment of these crimes. It was intended to prevent Chinese Christians from doing wrong, and by no means to prohibit the religion venerated and professed

* The Chinese designate thus the Christian Religion.

† Towards the end of the 16th century. Christianity did, in fact, penetrate into China as early as the 5th and 6th century; and especially in the 13th, it was very flourishing; at this epoch there existed at Pekin an archbishop with four suffragans. The Imperial commissioner Ky-yn might be ignorant of this fact, but it is vexatious that no one should be found to inform him of it.

by the nations of the West. I dare, therefore, to supplicate your Majesty for the future to exempt from chastisement those Chinese who profess the Christian religion, and who have not been found guilty of any crime or disorder.

"As for the French and the other foreigners who profess the Christian religion, they have been permitted to build churches and chapels in the territory of the five ports which are open to commerce; but they must not take the liberty of entering into the interior of the Empire to preach their religion. If any one in defiance of this prohibition should go beyond the assigned limits, and make rash excursions into other districts, the local authorities are to seize him and deliver him to the consul of his nation, in order that he may be kept within the bounds of his duty and punished. But he is not to be chastised summarily, or put to death.

"By that means your Majesty will show your benevolence and your affection for virtuous men; the tares will not be confounded with the good grain, and your sentiments and the justice of the laws will be made manifest.

"Supplicating your Majesty to exempt from all chastisement the Christians who remain honest and virtuous in their conduct, I venture humbly to present this petition, in order that your August Goodness may deign to approve my plan, and command it to be executed.

"(Respectful Petition.)"

THE APPROVAL OF THE EMPEROR.

"On the nineteenth day of the eleventh moon of the twenty-fourth year of *Tao-kouang* (1844), I received words written in vermilion:—

"I ACQUIESCE IN THIS PETITION. RESPECT THIS!"

In conformity with this approval, an Imperial edict was issued, addressed to the viceroys and governors of provinces, eulogising the Christian religion, and forbidding for the future all pursuit of Chinese Christians on account of it by any of the courts great or small.

The missionaries and Christians were transported with joy when these edicts were made known: they thought they saw in them the dawn of the long-desired era of religious liberty for the missions of China, and the consequent rapid progress of Christi-

anity; and the blessings and thanks of Europe and Asia were poured out on the French embassy.

Those, however, who had a practical knowledge of the Chinese and the Mandarins, could foresee that in reality the results of these edicts would be far from corresponding to these magnificent hopes. The Imperial command was promulgated and made known to the five free ports open to European commerce; and M. Lagrenée desired that it should be published also in the interior of the Empire; which was promised, but of course not done.

Copies of the petition of the commissioner Ky-yn and of the Emperor's edict were, however, distributed in great numbers among the Christian communities of the interior, and the neophytes were all able to read the eulogium that the Emperor had pronounced on their religion, and the prohibition of any future persecutions that he had addressed to the Mandarins, and they took it all for earnest. The Christians believed themselves perfectly free; and were for a brief interval convinced that, if the government of Pekin did not yet favour completely their mode of belief, it at least granted it perfect toleration.

But the local persecutions went on, nevertheless, as if neither ambassador, nor petition, nor edict had ever existed; and the Christians soon discovered that they were building on shifting sands, and that the paper liberty that had found its way to them, like a contraband article, was a mere chimera.

Those who were dragged before the tribunals, and who were so simple as to claim the protection of the Imperial edict and of the French embassy, were silenced in the most imperious manner. "What!" said the Mandarins, "has a low fellow like you the impudence to pretend to interfere in the transactions of the Emperor with foreign nations!"

The negotiations in favour of religious liberty, that took place between the French ambassador and the cunning Chinese diplomatists, were in fact of little value. They had no official character. The French government had made no demand of the Emperor of China, and he had made no promise to France. All that had passed was merely a personal communication between M. Lagrenée and Ky-yn. The one had expressed strongly his sympathy for the Chinese Christians, and the other had courteously recommended them to the protection of his Emperor.

The French ambassador once gone, and Ky-yn recalled, all these fine promises were scattered to the winds.

This is, in short, all that was obtained. In the petition of the Imperial commissioner he supplicates the Emperor "to deign for

the future to exempt from chastisement, Chinese as well as foreigners who shall be found professing the Christian religion, but who have not been guilty of any crime or disorder." But who was to watch the Mandarins, and find out whether they persecuted the Christians or not? Could the Chinese government permit foreigners to overlook the conduct of its own officers? If complaints were made, could not the Chinese always reply to them by falsehood? Could they not always say that the Christians detained in prison, or sent into exile, were punished for other crimes than that of their religious faith? And in fact this is precisely what has been done, and what it was very easy to foresee.

On the subject of the missionaries it is said in the petition, "neither the French nor other foreigners are to preach their religion in the interior of the Empire; and if any one, in defiance of this prohibition, should venture to pass beyond the assigned limits, he shall be delivered to the consul of his nation, in order that he may be restrained within his duty and punished."

Now, it is well known that our consuls would not exactly punish a missionary for preaching the Gospel; but these expressions would lead the Chinese to believe that we are disorderly men, stepping beyond the line of our duty, and punishable by the Mandarins of our own country; and it is evident such an impression is not likely to increase the influence of the missionaries. They may, perhaps, no longer be lawfully put to death when they are arrested; but can one be surprised that, on their painful journeys back to their consuls, they are subjected to the contempt, the sarcasms, and the ill-treatment of the Mandarins and their satellites?

If we should put it to the missionaries themselves who are preaching the Gospel in China in the midst of great sufferings and privations, whether they prefer the risk of death that they were liable to in former days, or the melancholy position in which they now find themselves, we know them sufficiently to be sure of their answer. We have never studied diplomacy; but it certainly seems that the excellent intentions of the French ambassador might have lent a more effectual support to the propagation of the faith. At various epochs French missionaries have suffered a martyr's death in various parts of China. In 1840, M. Perboyre, an apostle and a saint, was put to death by order of the Emperor, in a grand ceremonial on the public square of the capital of *Hou-pé;* not a word was said of this atrocious and iniquitous execution, or of any other. When France entered into diplomatic

relation with China, the Imperial commissioner must have expected to be questioned concerning these judicial assassinations, and the silence of our ambassador must have greatly surprised him. France certainly had a right to ask of the Chinese government some account of so many Frenchmen unjustly tortured and put to death. She might have ventured at least to ask the question, for what crime the Emperor had strangled them? A few inquiries on the subject of the venerable martyr of 1840, might have helped the Chinese to believe that France does take some interest in the lives of her children. The Chinese government ought, in our opinion, to have been strongly urged on this point; the moment was favourable, and it ought to have been caught in the fact of its savage barbarism, and public and honourable amends to the memory of our martyrs inexorably demanded from it, in the face of the whole Empire; an apology ought to have appeared in the Pekin Gazette, and an expiatory monument have been erected on the public square of *Ou-tchang-fou*, where M. Perboyre was strangled. In this manner the Christian religion would have been for ever glorified in the Empire, the Christians raised in public opinion, and the life of a missionary rendered inviolable. It would then have been needless to stipulate that, for the future, the Chinese should not chastise them in a summary manner, or put them to death. They would themselves have taken very good care to do nothing of the kind. This ought to have been the first business of the embassy, on its arrival at Canton; assuredly, in so doing it would have had justice on its side; and the parade, the festivals, and the shakings of hands might have come afterwards.

Do not let it be thought, however, that we have the slightest intention of throwing any blame on the ambassador. Since we have undertaken to speak of China, we must do so truly and frankly, to the best of our knowledge and belief; but we are fully persuaded that M. Lagrenée has himself the interest of the missions much at heart, and that, if it only depended on him, all the Chinese would be Christians, and would profess their religion in perfect liberty. We know how difficult and delicate was his task; that he had to act on his own responsibility, and without any official instruction from his government; but we cannot avoid speaking of things as they are. In 1844, people in Europe were generally convinced, and many are so still, that China was at length open, and the Christian religion entirely free.

But the truth is, unfortunately, that the English have no more opened China, commercially speaking, than the French ambassador

has obtained for the Chinese religious liberty. The subjects of her Britannic Majesty would not venture to set foot in the interior of the city of Canton, although by treaty they are in possession of this privilege; they cannot go beyond its environs, for the intolerance and hatred of the native population keeps them in some measure blockaded in their factories. As for the Christians, their situation is not in the least ameliorated; they are, as they were before, at the mercy of the Mandarins, who persecute them, pillage them, throw them into prison, torture them, and send them to die in exile, just as easily as if there were no representative of France in the Empire, and no French ships of war on her coasts. It is only in the five free ports that they do not dare to torment the neophytes, thanks to the energetic and constant protection of our legation at Macao and our consul at *Chang-hai*.

Although the Imperial edict in favour of the Christians appeared to us insufficient, and almost delusive, on account of its non-promulgation in the interior of the Empire, we resolved to take what little advantage we could of it, whether for ourselves or the Christians, should any good opportunity present itself.

Two days after our appearance before the tribunal of the first commissioner, the Mantchou prefect of the Garden of Flowers, who had become rather friendly, announced to us that our affairs being sufficiently known, we should not have to undergo another judicial examination; and that in the course of the day the viceroy would have us summoned, in order to signify what had been determined with respect to us. We had a long and lively discussion, on the question of the ceremonies that we should have to observe before the chief of the province and the representative of the Emperor. They brought a crowd of arguments to convince us that we ought to go down on our knees before him. In the first place, it was a prodigious honour for us to be admitted to his presence at all, since he might be considered as a sort of diminutive of the Son of Heaven. Then, to remain standing straight upright before him would be to offer him an insult; besides giving him a very bad idea of our education, it would irritate him, would alter the good disposition he had towards us, would draw down his anger upon us; and moreover, they added, whether we liked or not, we should find ourselves compelled to kneel. It would be impossible for us to resist the influence of his majestic presence.

We ourselves felt pretty sure of the contrary, and we declared to the prefect, that he might depend upon it that would not happen. Nevertheless, we would cause no scandal, nor give the viceroy

any reason to think us wanting in sentiments of respect and veneration towards his person and his high dignity. We begged the prefect of the Garden of Flowers, therefore, to inform the viceroy that we positively could not appear before him in an attitude that our manners did not require even in presence of our own sovereign, but that we had no intention of failing in respect towards him, and that we would pay him every honour conformably to the rites of the West; but that we would rather submit to the irremediable misfortune of being deprived of his presence than yield this point. It may readily be supposed that in fact we cared little enough about this matter of going down on our knees, since in China it is really nothing more than a mark of respect and civility; but we determined to keep an upright position, because, if we had once consented to bend the knee, we should have been obliged ever after to prostrate ourselves before every trumpery little official that we happened to meet, and that would have been a source of exceeding annoyance; while we thought with reason that every one would consider himself obliged to treat with politeness and consideration, the men who had not been obliged to kneel even in the first tribunal of the province. Our obstinacy was completely successful, and it was agreed that we should be presented in the European fashion.

Towards noon two handsome state palanquins were sent to fetch us, and we betook ourselves, attended by a brilliant escort, to the palace of the most illustrious *Pao-hing*, viceroy of the province of Sse-tchouen. The tribunal of this high dignitary of the Chinese Empire had nothing to distinguish it from those that we had seen before, except its superior size and somewhat better preservation. It was in the same style of architecture, and had precisely the same combination of courts and gardens. All the Mandarins, civil and military, without exception, had been convoked; and by degrees as they arrived they took their places according to their respective ranks and dignities, in a vast hall on long divans, where we were already placed in company with the two prefects of the town, who were to present us. In a neighbouring apartment an orchestra of Chinese musicians was executing some soft but very whimsical symphonies, that were by no means unpleasing. Very soon it was announced that the viceroy was in his cabinet. A great door opened, all the Mandarins rose, fell into order, and defiled in the most profound silence as far as an antechamber, where they ranged themselves according to rank.

Our two introducers now desired us to pass through the files of Mandarins, and conducted us to the door of a cabinet, which was

open, but they stopped on the threshold and made a sign for us to enter. At the same time the viceroy, who was seated cross-legged on a divan, beckoned us towards him in a very gracious manner. We bowed low and advanced some steps. We were alone in the apartment with him; for all the Mandarins, civil and military, were mounting guard in the antechamber; but they were near enough to hear what was spoken.

We were at first greatly struck by the simplicity of the apartment, and of the high personage who inhabited it. It was a narrow room papered with blue, and its only furniture consisted of a small divan with red cushions, a flower-stand, and some vases of flowers. The illustrious Pao-hing was an old man of seventy or thereabouts, tall and thin, but with a countenance full of sweetness and benevolence. His small, but still brilliant, eyes were keen and penetrating; his beard long and somewhat scanty, and his complexion very fair, with a slight yellow tinge. Altogether his appearance was not wanting in majesty, and the simple blue silk robe he wore contrasted favourably with the richly embroidered habits of the Mandarins in attendance upon him. Pao-hing was a Mantchou Tatar, and a cousin and intimate friend of the Emperor. In their infancy they had lived together, and had never ceased to feel towards each other a lively and cordial affection. The viceroy asked us, at first, whether we were suitably lodged in the mansion he had assigned to us. "We have been making inquiries," he added, "of the soldiers of your escort; and it appears that the military officer who accompanied you from Ta-tsien-lou, did not lodge you in the communal palaces. I have dismissed that vile man, who had no regard for the dignity of the Empire." It was in vain that we endeavoured to plead for him.

"And why in fact," said the viceroy, crossing his arms, "did they prevent you from residing in Thibet? Why did they compel you to return?"

"Illustrious personage," said we, "we understand nothing of the matter, and should be very glad to know. When we return to France, and our sovereign asks us why we were expelled from Thibet, what must we answer him?"

Here Pao-hing burst out into a vehement attack upon Ki-Chan; he spoke of the difficulties that he was always throwing in the path of the government, and ended by calling him *to-pché;* an expression that can only be translated by "creator of embarrassments."

Pao-hing afterwards requested us to come quite close to him; and then he set himself to take a deliberate survey of our personal appearance, first of one and then of the other, while he at the same

time amused himself by turning in his mouth fragments of the Areca nut, which the Mantchous like so much to chew. He took several pinches of snuff also, out of a little phial, and had the courtesy to offer it to us, though without speaking, and still seeming as profoundly occupied with observing our features as if he were about to take our portraits. We considered that he admired our beauty, for he asked whether we had any medicine or recipe for preserving that fresh and florid complexion. We replied that the temperament of Europeans differed much from that of the Chinese; but that in all countries a sober and well regulated course of life was the best means of preserving health.

"Do you hear," he added, turning to the numerous Mandarins in waiting, and repeating emphatically, "in all countries a sober and well regulated life is the best means of preserving health." All the balls, red, blue, white, and yellow, bowed profoundly in token of assent.

After having taken another long pinch, Pao-hing asked us what our plans were, and where we wished to go to. This seemed rather a curious question, and we answered, "Where we wish to go to is to Thibet and Lha-ssa."

"Thibet and Lha-ssa! Why you have just come from there."

"No matter! We wish to go back to them."

"What do you want to do at Thibet and Lha-ssa?"

"You know that our only business anywhere is to preach our religion."

"Yes, I know; but you must not think of Lha-ssa, you would do much better to preach your religion in your own country. Thibet is a good-for-nothing place. I would not have sent you away from it, since you wished to stay; but now that you are here, I must send you to Canton."

"Since we are not free, send us where you please."

The viceroy then said, that since we were now in his province, he would be answerable for our safety; but that it was his duty to forward us to the representative of our nation. "You may," he added, "remain for a time at Tching-tou-fou, to rest yourselves and make the necessary preparations for your journey; and I shall see you again before your departure. In the mean time I will give such orders as will enable you to travel as conveniently as possible." We bowed respectfully, and thanked him for his kind intentions with respect to our accommodation. Just as we were taking our leave, he called us back to ask about our yellow caps and red girdles. "Your costume," said he, "is not that of the Central Nation, and you must not travel in that fashion."

"Behold!" said we, "you have the right not only to hinder us from going where we will, but even to prevent our dressing ourselves according to our own fancy!"

Pao-hing began to laugh at this, and said, as he waved his hand in farewell, that since we were so fond of that costume, we might keep it. The viceroy then returned to his private apartments to the sound of music; and the Mandarins accompanied us to the gate of the palace, congratulating us on the benevolent and cordial reception we had met with from the most illustrious representative of the Son of Heaven, in the province of Sse-tchouen.

We have already mentioned the report that Pao-hing addressed to the Emperor concerning us, and we will give here the sequel of it, which is a reply to the Imperial despatch already cited:—

"I, your subject," says the viceroy of Sse-tchouen, "have carefully inquired into the purpose which the said foreigners have in undertaking such long journeys to preach their religion, and whence they derive the resources necessary for their daily maintenance, why they remain so long without returning to their country, whether any definite period is assigned to their stay, what number of proselytes they have made, what special object they had in wishing to go to Si-tsang (Thibet), which is the residence of the Lamas.

"The result of these inquiries is, that they are travelling about only to preach their religion, and that their mission is to be of uncertain duration. When, whilst on a journey, they think they shall want the means of supplying their necessary expenses, they write to the agent of their nation, who is, at Macao, and he immediately sends them money. In all the provinces of China there are men of the same country, who have expatriated themselves to preach their religion, and there is not one of them who does not exhort men to do good. They do not propose to themselves any other object. They neither recollect the numbers nor the names of the persons to whom they have taught their doctrine.

"As to their journey to Thibet, they wished, after having preached their religion there, to return from it to their own country by the way of Nepaul; but as they were not sufficiently versed in the language of Thibet, they were not able during their stay there to make any converts. At this epoch the high functionary Ki-Chan who resides in the capital of Thibet, ordered an inquiry, in consequence of which they were arrested and sent under escort to Sse-tchouen.

"I have opened their wooden chest, and examined the letters

and papers it contained; but I have not been able to find any one who could read those characters and understand them.

"The strangers, when interrogated on the subject, replied that they were family letters, and authentic certificates of their religious mission.

"I wished to inquire carefully whether the declaration they made before Ki-Chan was, or was not, the expression of the truth; but I have not been able to find any irrefragable proof.

"I then examined their beards and their eyebrows, their eyes and their complexions; and I found them all different from those of the men of the Central Kingdom; so that it seemed to me demonstrated that they were really strangers, coming from a distant country, and that they are not to be mistaken for worthless persons from the Interior Territory (China). Thereupon there does not remain in my mind the slightest doubt.

"If it should be considered desirable to know the contents of their letters and foreign books, they must, I think, be sent to Canton, in order that a man versed in those foreign languages may be found, who shall read them and make known their contents.

"Should no further discovery be made concerning them, these strangers may then be placed in the hands of the consul of France, in order that he may recognise them, and send them back to their own country. By that means the truth will be brought to light.

"As for Samdadchiemba, as it appears from his examination that he was only attached to these strangers in the quality of a servant receiving wages, it seems proper to send him back to his native country; namely, the district of *Nien-pé* in the province of *Kan-sou*. There he will be delivered to the local magistrate, who will immediately set him at liberty.

"If hereafter circumstances should arise that shall appear to relate to the object of your first decree, I will, as is my duty, write a faithful report concerning them, which I will address to your Majesty. At the moment when your instructions have reached me the weather is excessively hot, and the clothing and provisions for the said strangers not yet ready. I, your subject, after having written and sealed this exact and circumstantial report, have charged a public functionary to take the Imperial road and conduct them to their destination, by the province of Hou-pé and other places."

This report, which we were only able to procure a year afterwards when we were at Macao, will serve to show the frank and upright character of the viceroy of Sse-tchouen. Not one single word is found in it, to indicate anything of the inveterate antipathy which the Chinese so often cherish towards strangers and Christians,

though he could not have imagined that what he had written was ever likely to fall into our hands; and in pronouncing this eulogium on French missionaries, he only yielded honestly to the impulse of genuine conviction.

CHAP. III.

Tching-tou-fou, the Capital of the Province of Sse-tchouen. — Numerous visits of Mandarins. — Constitutive Principle of the Chinese Government. — The Emperor. — Curious Organisation of Chinese Nobility. — Central Administration of Pekin. — The six Sovereign Courts. — Imperial Academy. — Moniteur of Pekin. — Provincial Gazettes. — Administration of the Provinces. — Rapacity of the Mandarins. — Venality of Justice. — Family of a Magistrate. — His two Sons. — His Schoolmaster. — Primary Instruction very widely diffused in China. — Chinese Urbanity. — System of Instruction. — Elementary Book. — The four Classical Books. — The five Sacred Books. — Arrangements for our Departure. — Last Visit to the Viceroy.

TCHING-TOU-FOU, the capital of the province of Sse-tchouen, is one of the finest towns in the Empire. It is situated in the middle of an admirably fertile plain, watered by beautiful streams, and bounded towards the horizon by hills of graceful and varied forms.

The principal streets are of a good width, paved entirely with large flagstones, and so clean that you can scarcely, as you pass through them, believe yourself to be in a Chinese town.

The shops with their long and brilliant signs, the exquisite order with which the merchandise displayed in them is arranged, the great number and beauty of the tribunals, pagodas, and of what we must call literary institutions, — all contribute to make of Tching-tou-fou a town in some measure exceptional; or at least this is the impression we retained concerning it, when subsequently we had visited the most renowned cities of the other provinces.

Our host the magistrate informed us that the present capital of Sse-tchouen was quite a modern town, the old one having been reduced to ashes by a terrible conflagration, and he related to us on this occasion an anecdote or a fable, that we repeat because it is quite in the Chinese taste. Some months before the destruction of the old city, a Bonze was one day seen in the streets, ringing a small bell, and crying out with a loud voice: — *I-ko-jen. leang-ho-yen-tsin*, that is to say — "One man, and two eyes!" At first nobody paid much attention to him. "One man, and two eyes" did not appear a very remarkable phenomenon, and the existence of such a one hardly seemed a truth that deserved to be proclaimed

with such solemnity and perseverance. But as the Bonze kept continually repeating his formula from morning till night, people became at last curious to know what he could possibly mean by it. To all questions, however, he would make no other answer than his everlasting "One man, and two eyes."

At last the magistrates took up the matter, but they could make nothing of it. Inquiries were made where this Bonze came from, but nobody knew. No one had ever seen him before; he was never known to eat or drink, and all day long he traversed the streets of the city with a grave face and downcast eyes, ringing his bell and incessantly refreshing the memory of the public concerning "One man, and two eyes." In the evening he disappeared, but no one knew where he went to, to pass the night.

This went on for two months, and people ceased to take any notice of him, setting him down for a very eccentric individual or a madman. But one day it was noticed that he had not made his appearance; and on that day, towards noon, fire broke out at once, in many parts of the town, with such violence that the inhabitants had only just time to snatch what they considered most valuable, and rush out into the fields. Before the end of the day, the town was a heap of ashes and smoking ruins.

Everybody then recollected the words of the Bonze, which, it seems, were an enigmatical prediction of this frightful catastrophe.

It would be impossible to understand the riddle without having an idea of the form of the Chinese characters, in which the key to it is found. The following character signifies "man." In adding to it two points, or eyes, you obtain another which signifies "fire;" so that in crying out "One man, and two eyes," the Bonze meant to announce the conflagration that reduced the capital to ashes.

The man who told us this story could give no further explanation, and we shall take good care ourselves not to attempt any. "The city was entirely rebuilt," he added, "and this is how you come to find it so handsome and regular."

The inhabitants of Tching-tou-fou are fully worthy of the celebrity of their city. The higher classes, who are very numerous, are remarkable for the elegance of their manners and attire; the middle also rival the higher in politeness and courtesy, and appear also to be in quite easy circumstances. The poor are indeed very numerous, as they are in all the great centres of population in China; but in general it may be said that the inhabitants of this town enjoy a more considerable degree of opulence than appears in any other place.

The very benevolent reception we had met with from the viceroy, did not fail to procure us a great number of friends, and place us in relation with the most distinguished persons in the city, as well as with the great functionaries, civil and military, the first magistrates of the tribunals, and the chiefs of the learned corporation.

When we were living at the missions in the midst of our Christian communities, we were obliged by our position to keep ourselves at a very respectful distance from the Mandarins and their dangerous neighbourhood. The care for our own safety, and still more that of our neophytes, made this caution indispensable. Like other missionaries, we held intercourse with scarcely any other class than that of peasants and artisans, and it was, therefore, difficult for us to become extensively acquainted with the Chinese as a nation. We were familiar with the manners and habits of the people, their means of existence, and the ties that unite them to each other; but we had no very exact knowledge of the superior classes, or of the aristocratic element that gives impulse, life, and movement to the social body. We perceived effects without knowing the causes.

But the constant communication we had with the Mandarins and the cultivated classes, during our residence at Tching-tou-fou, enabled us to acquire a great amount of useful information on these points, and to study more closely the mechanism and organisation, or rather what constitutes the vitality and strength of a nation. To become acquainted with man, it is not sufficient to observe his movements, and dissect his limbs and organs: one must study and penetrate into his soul, which is the principle of life, and the motive cause of all his actions.

From the thirteenth century, when the first notion of China was brought into Europe by the celebrated Venetian, Marco Polo, up to our own days, all parties seem to have agreed in regarding the Chinese as a very singular people — a people unlike all others. But if we except this one opinion, which is universally received, we scarcely find in what has been written concerning the Chinese, any thing but contradictions. Some are in perpetual ecstasy with them; others are constantly heaping upon them abuse and ridicule.

Voltaire has drawn for us an enchanting picture of China, its patriarchal manners, its paternal government, its institutions based on filial piety, and its wise administration always entrusted to the most learned and virtuous men. Montesquieu, on the contrary, has used the darkest colours, and painted them as a miserable abject race, crouching under a brutal despotism, and driven, like a vile herd, by the will of the Emperor.

These two portraits, drawn by the authors of *L'Esprit des Lois* and *L'Essai sur les Mœurs*, have very little resemblance to the original. There is gross exaggeration on both sides, and the truth is certainly to be sought for between them.

In China, as everywhere else, there is a mixture of what is good and bad, of vice and virtue, that may give occasion to satire or panegyric, as the attention is fixed on one or the other. It is easy to find among a people whatever you desire to see in them, if you set out with a preconceived opinion and the resolution to preserve it intact. Thus Voltaire was dreaming of a nation whose annals should be in contradiction with Biblical tradition, a people rationalistic, anti-religious, and whose days nevertheless flowed on in uninterrupted peace and prosperity. In China he thought he had found this model nation, and he did not fail to recommend it to the admiration of Europe.

Montesquieu, on the other hand, was putting forth his theory of despotic government, and wanted some example to illustrate it. He took the Chinese for this purpose; and showed them trembling under the iron rod of a tyrant, and crushed beneath a pitiless system of legislation.

We intend to enter into some details concerning Chinese institutions and the mechanism of this government, which assuredly does not merit either the invectives that have been poured out on its despotism, or the pompous eulogies that have been pronounced on its antique and patriarchal wisdom. In developing the Chinese governmental system, we shall see that practice is often in contradiction to theory; and that the fine laws found in the books, are not quite so often seen in application.

The idea of the family is the grand principle that serves as the basis of society in China. Filial piety, the constant subject of dissertation to moralists and philosophers, and continually recommended in the proclamations of Emperors and the speeches of Mandarins, has become the fundamental root of all other virtues.

All means are made use of to exalt this sentiment, so as to make of it an absolute passion; it assumes all forms, mingles in all actions, and serves as the moral pivot of public life. Every crime, every attempt against the authority, property, or life of individuals, is treated as filial disobedience; whilst on the other hand, all acts of virtue, devotion, compassion towards the unfortunate, commercial probity, or even valour in battle, are referred to filial piety; to be a good or a bad citizen, is to be a good or bad son.

The Emperor is the personification of this grand principle, which dominates and penetrates more or less deeply all the strata of

society, in this immense agglomeration of three hundred millions of individuals. In the Chinese language he is called *Hoang-te*, August Sovereign, or *Hoang-chou*, August Elevation; but his name *par excellence* is *Tien-dze*, Son of Heaven.

According to the ideas of Confucius and his disciples, the great movements and revolutions of the Empire are under the direct guidance of Heaven; and it is the will of Heaven only that overthrows some dynasties and substitutes others. Heaven is the true and only master of the Empire, it chooses whom it pleases as its representative, and communicates to him its absolute authority over the people. The sovereignty is a celestial mandate, a holy mission entrusted to an individual for the sake of the community, and withdrawn from him as soon as he shows himself forgetful of his duty and unworthy of his high office. It follows from this political fatalism, that in epochs of revolution the struggles are terrible, until some decided success and evident superiority have become, for the people, a sign of the will of Heaven. Then they rally at once round the new power, and submit to it for a long time without any hesitation.

Heaven, they imagine, had a representative, an adopted son; but it has abandoned him, and withdrawn its credentials; it has chosen another, and he of course is the one to be obeyed. — This is the whole system.*

The Emperor being the son of Heaven, and consequently, according to the Chinese expression, Father and Mother of the Empire, has a right to the respect, the veneration, the worship even of his children. His authority is absolute; it is he who makes and who abolishes the laws, who grants privileges to Mandarins or degrades them, to whom alone belongs the power over life and death, who is the source of all administrative and judicial authority, who has at his disposal the whole power and revenues of the Empire; in one word, the state is the Emperor. His omnipotence, indeed, extends even farther, for he can transmit this enormous power to whom he pleases, and choose his successor among his children, without any law of inheritance imposing a restraint upon him in his choice.

The sovereign power in China is, then, in all respects absolute; but it is not, as has been supposed, for that reason despotic. It is a strong and vast system of centralisation. The Emperor is the head of an immense family; and the absolute authority that

* It is in consequence of this theory, that the present pretender has taken the name of *Tien-té*, that is, "Celestial Virtue."

belongs to him is not absorbed, but delegated to his ministers, who in their turn transmit their powers to the inferior officers of their administrative governments. The subdivisions of authority thus extend gradually downwards to groups of families, of which the fathers are the natural chiefs, and just as absolute within their sphere as any other. It may well be supposed that this absolute power, being thus infinitely divisible, is no longer equally dangerous; and besides, public opinion is always ready to check any excesses on the part of the Emperor, who would not, without exciting general indignation, dare to violate the rights of any of his subjects. He has also his private and general councils, the members of which have the right of expressing their opinions, and even remonstrating with him on matters both of public and private concern. One may read in the annals of China, how the censors have often acquitted themselves of their duty, with a freedom and vigour worthy of all praise. Finally, these potentates, the objects of so much homage during their lives, are often after death, like the ancient kings of Egypt, subjected to a trial, the verdict from which is attached to their name and descends to posterity. By these posthumous names only do they become known to history; and as they are always either eulogistic or satirical, they serve to give a brief estimate of the character of their reign.

The greatest counterpoise of the Imperial power consists of the literary aristocracy, or corporation of men of letters; an ancient institution which has been established on a solid basis, and the origin of which is at least as early as the eleventh century before our era. It may be said that the administration receives all its real and direct influence from this sort of literary oligarchy.

The Emperor can only choose his civil agents among the lettered class, and in conformity with established arrangements. Every Chinese may present himself for the examination for the third literary degree; and those who obtain this, may then become candidates for the second, which opens the way to official employment. To fill the higher offices the prize must be obtained in the competition for the first degree.

It seems, doubtless, a magnificent thing to organise the government of a great Empire by literary qualification; but though it may be a subject of admiration, it is not to be regarded as a model for imitation in all countries.

The Emperor is recognised by the laws as the sole proprietor of the soil of the Empire; but this is a mere theory, and it does not hinder the property in land from being really as firmly established as it is in Europe. The government, in fact, only possesses the

right over it in case of non-payment of the tax, or of confiscation for state crimes.

The villages are collectively responsible to the Exchequer for the discharge of all fiscal impositions, and they have at their head a mayor called *Sian-yo*, who is chosen by universal suffrage.

The communal organisation is perhaps nowhere else as perfect as in China; and these mayors are chosen by the people, without the Mandarins presenting any candidates or seeking in any way to influence the votes.

Every man is both elector and eligible for this office; but it is usual to choose one of advanced age, who both by his character and fortune occupies a high position in the village. We have known many of the Chinese mayors, and we can affirm that in general they are worthy of the suffrages with which they have been honoured by their fellow-citizens. The time for which they are elected varies in the different localities; they are charged with the police duties, and serve also as mediators between the Mandarins and the people, in matters beyond their own competence. We shall have occasion to return to this salutary institution, which agrees very ill with the ideas we commonly entertain of the heavy despotism which is supposed to weigh on the Chinese nation.

The corporation of lettered men, recruited every year by the method of examination, constitutes a privileged class, almost the only nobility recognised in China, and it may be considered as the chief strength and nerve of the Empire. Hereditary titles only exist for the Imperial family, and for the descendants of Confucius, who are still very numerous in the province of *Chantong*.

To the hereditary titles which the relations of the Emperor enjoy, there are attached certain prerogatives, as well as a very modest allowance, the right of wearing a red or yellow girdle, of putting a plume of peacock's feathers in their caps, and of having six, eight, or twelve bearers to their palanquins. They cannot, more than any other citizen, pretend to any public office, without having previously taken their literary degree at Pekin and Moukden the capital of Mantchuria. We have often seen these Tatar nobles living in idleness and penury on their small pensions, and having no other proof to show of their illustrious origin than the red or yellow girdle. A private tribunal, however, is charged to govern them and superintend their conduct.

The first civil and military Mandarins who have distinguished themselves in the administration or in war, receive the titles of *koung, heon, phy, tze*, and *nan;* which may be considered as cor-

responding with those of duke, marquess, count, baron, and knight. These titles or grades are, however, not hereditary, and give no right to the sons of the individual rewarded by them, but, what appears to us very curious, they may be carried back to his ancestors. This custom was introduced with reference to the funeral ceremonies and the titles that the Chinese bestow on their defunct relatives. An officer who has been raised in rank by the Emperor, cannot accomplish the funeral rites of his family in a suitable manner, if his ancestors have not been decorated with a corresponding title. To suppose that the son is of higher rank than the father, would be to overthrow the hierarchy, and attack the fundamental principle of the Empire. A nobility, not merely confined to the individual, but even retrograding to the ancestors, instead of being transmitted to the descendants, does appear excessively whimsical to us, and one must be a Chinese to have thought of such a thing. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to inquire whether, in reality, it may not be the better plan of the two.

All the officers, civil and military, of the Chinese Empire are divided into nine orders, *khiou-ping*, distinguished one from the other by certain buttons, or rather balls, of the size of a pigeon's egg, which are worn above the official cap. This distinctive ball is of plain red coral for the first order, of carved coral for the second, of a transparent deep blue stone for the third, of pale blue for the fourth, crystal for the fifth, of some opaque white stone for the sixth, and for the seventh, eighth, and ninth of gilt and wrought copper.

Every order is subdivided into two classes; the one active and official, the other supernumerary; but this makes no difference in the balls. All the official personages comprised in these nine orders, are designated by the generic term of *kouang-fou*. The name of Mandarin is unknown to the Chinese; it was invented by the first Europeans who visited the country, and is probably derived from the Portuguese word "*mandar*" to command, out of which they made Mandarin.

The administration of the Celestial Empire is divided into three parts; the superior administration of the Empire, the local administration of Pekin, and that of the provinces and colonies.

The entire government is under the direction of two councils, attached to the person of the Emperor; the *Nei-ko*, and the *Kiun-ke-tchou*. The first is charged with the preparation of plans, and the despatch of current business. Its duty is, according to the official book, "to put in order, and to make manifest the thoughts

and designs of the Imperial will, and to regulate the form of administrative decrees." It may be regarded in some measure as the secretaryship of the Empire.

The second council, named Kiun-ke-tchou, deliberates with the Emperor concerning political affairs; it is composed of members of the Nei-ko, and of the presidents and vice-presidents of the superior courts. The Emperor presides at its sittings which generally take place very early in the morning.

Below these two general councils are the six sovereign courts or boards, *Leou-pou*, which correspond with our ministries, and take cognisance of all the civil and military affairs of the eighteen provinces of China. At the head of each of these are placed two presidents, the one Chinese, the other Tatar, and four vice-presidents, of whom two are Chinese, and two Tatars. Every board has special offices for the different departments of business, and in these are a great number of divisions and subdivisions.

First. The highest sovereign court, called court of civil employments, *Li-pou*, which has the presentation to civil offices, on the nomination of the Emperor, and the distribution of civil and literary employments throughout the Empire; it has four divisions, which regulate the order of promotions and changes, keep notes concerning the conduct of official persons, determine their salaries, and their leaves of absence in times of mourning, and distribute the diplomas of posthumous rank, granted to the ancestors of officers admitted into the ranks of the nobility.

Secondly. The court of public revenne, *Hou-pou* which is occupied with the imposition of taxes and tributes, the distribution of salaries and pensions, the receipt and expenditure of corn and money, and their transport by land and water.

It is also the business of this court to divide the territory of the Empire into provinces, departments, circles, and cantons. It takes census of the population, keeps the registry of lands, and assesses the taxes and military contingents. This financial court comprises fourteen divisions, which correspond pretty well with the ancient division of China into fourteen interior provinces; besides this, it superintends the tribunal of civil appeal, which decides disputes concerning property and inheritance; it manages the coinage, the manufactories of silk, and the establishments for dyeing; and it looks to the provision of corn for the capital.

It is also this court that regulates the distributions of corn and rice, and the gratuitous loans by which the people are assisted in times of scarcity and famine. Finally, it is honoured with the office of presenting annually to the Emperor, the list of young

Mantchou girls, who are ambitious to become inmates of his harem.

It is one of the officers of the *Hou-pou* who presides every year at the celebrated agricultural festival, in which the Emperor is seen to put his hand to the plough in a field, trace the furrow, and sow it with corn.

Thirdly. The sovereign court of rites, *Ly-pou* has the business of regulating ceremonies and public solemnities, the minute details of which are so important in the eyes of the Chinese. It has four divisions, which are occupied with the ordinary and extraordinary ceremonial of the court, with the rights of sacrifices in honour of the souls of former sovereigns and illustrious men, with the regulation of public festivals, and the form of the robes and head-dresses worn by the officers of government. This court superintends schools, public academies, and literary examinations, and determines the number, the choice, and the privileges of the learned of various classes. Foreign diplomacy also lies within its jurisdiction; it prescribes the forms to be observed in the intercourse with tributary princes and foreign potentates, and whatever has relation to the embassies: and finally, it has the general direction of music, which in theory, may perhaps be very fine, but does not in China exactly strike one as such in the execution.

Fourthly. There is the supreme court of war, *Ping-pou*, which has also four subdivisions, and regulates the appointment and promotions of military officers, registers the notes furnished concerning their conduct, and attends to the commissariat department, and the punishments and military examinations for the whole army. One of these subdivisions has the special charge of the cavalry, the camels, the relays of horses, and the transport of provisions and ammunition of all kinds.

Fifthly. The court of chastisements or criminal jurisdiction, *Hing-pou* has eighteen subdivisions, corresponding with the eighteen provinces of the Empire, attending to the criminal business of each province; a corps of prison inspectors; legislative chambers, which receive the articles of the penal code on their promulgation, and a board of fines and penalties.

Sixthly. The court or board of public works, *Koung-pou*, has the direction of all the works executed at the expense of the state, such as the construction of public buildings, the fabrication of utensils and clothing intended for the troops and for public officers, the digging of canals, the formation of dikes, the erection of funereal monuments for the imperial family and illustrious persons. It also regulates weights and measures, and

directs the manufacture of gunpowder; this supreme court has four divisions.

The superior administration at Pekin comprises also the colonial office, *Ly-fan-yuen*, which has the superintendence of "strangers from without;" a designation applied to the Mongol princes, the Lamas of Thibet, and the Mahometan princes and chiefs of the districts near Persia. The Ly-fan-yuen, which governs the Mongol tribes, regulates, as well as it can, the rather entangled affairs of the nomadic hordes; and interferes, in an indirect manner, in the government of Thibet and the small Mahometan states of Turkestan.

The *Tou-tcha-yuen*, or office of universal censorship, is placed above the sphere of action of all these administrative wheels, and overlooks their movements. Its office is to criticise the manners and morals of the people, and the conduct of the *employés*. The ministers, princes, even the Emperor himself, must, whether he likes it or not, submit to the remonstrances of this censor.

Finally. There is the *Toun-tchin-sse*, or palace of representation, which transmits to the privy-council of the Emperor the reports sent from the provinces, and the appeals against sentences pronounced by magistrates. This palace of representation, in which are united the members of the six supreme courts and the office of universal censorship, forms a kind of court of cassation to decide on appeals in criminal cases, and on sentences of death. The decisions of these three courts united are required to be unanimously given. In the contrary case, it is the Emperor himself who must be the judge in the last resort.

The famous Imperial academy of *Han-Lin* is composed of literary graduates; it furnishes orators for the public festivals, and literary examiners for the provinces, and is supposed generally to promote the cause of learning and science. It contains within itself a board for the editing of official documents, and another for the revision of the Tatar and Chinese works published at the expense of government. Its two presidents inhabit the Emperor's palace, and they overlook the studies and labours of the academicians. The college of historiographers, and the whole body of annalists, depend on the academy of Han-lin. The first are occupied with drawing up the history of this or that remarkable reign or epoch. The annalists, to the number of twenty-two, write day by day the annals of the reigning dynasty: which are only published when another has succeeded it. They are on duty by turns, four at a time, and remain near the person of the Emperor to take notes of his actions and even his words.

The official gazette of Pekin may also be counted among the organs of the administration. It is a real *Moniteur Universel*, in which nothing can be printed which has not been presented to the Emperor, or which does not proceed from the Emperor himself; the editors of it would not dare to change or add anything, but under penalty of the severest punishment. This Pekin gazette is printed every day, in the form of a pamphlet, and contains sixty or seventy pages. The subscription to it does not amount to more than twelve francs a year; and it is a most interesting collection, and very useful in making one acquainted with the Chinese Empire.

It gives a sketch of public affairs and remarkable events; the memorials and petitions presented to the Emperor, and his answers to them; his instructions to the Mandarins and the people; the judicial proceedings, with the principal condemnations and the pardons granted by the Emperor; and also a summary of the deliberations of the sovereign courts. The principal articles, and all the public documents, are reprinted in the official gazettes of the provinces.

Papers thus edited certainly serve to keep the Mandarins and the people acquainted with public affairs; but they are little calculated to excite or encourage political passions. In ordinary times, and when they are not under the influence of any revolutionary movement, the Chinese are not at all inclined to meddle with affairs of government: they are a delightfully quiet people to deal with. In 1851, at the period of the death of the Emperor *Tao-kouang*, we were travelling on the road from Pekin, and one day, when we had been taking tea at an inn in company with some Chinese citizens, we tried to get up a little political discussion.

We spoke of the recent death of the Emperor, an important event which, of course, must have interested everybody. We expressed our anxiety on the subject of the succession to the imperial throne, the heir to which was not yet publicly declared. "Who knows," said we, "which of the three sons of the Emperor will have been appointed to succeed him? If it should be the eldest, will he pursue the same system of government? If the younger, he is still very young; and it is said there are contrary influences, two opposing parties, at court—to which will he lean?" We put forward, in short, all kinds of hypotheses, in order to stimulate these good citizens to make some observation. But they hardly listened to us. We came back again and again to the charge, in order to elicit some opinion or other, on questions that really appeared to us of great importance. But to all our piquant sugges-

tions, they replied only by shaking their heads, puffing out whiffs of smoke, and taking great gulps of tea.

This apathy was really beginning to provoke us, when one of these worthy Chinese, getting up from his seat, came and laid his two hands on our shoulders in a manner quite paternal, and said, smiling rather ironically,—

"Listen to me, my friend! Why should you trouble your heart and fatigue your head by all these vain surmises? The Mandarins have to attend to affairs of State; they are paid for it. Let them earn their money, then. But don't let us torment ourselves about what does not concern us. We should be great fools to want to do political business for nothing."

"That is very conformable to reason," cried the rest of the company; and thereupon they pointed out to us that our tea was getting cold and our pipes were out.

The local administration of Pekin comprehends several special institutions, the functions of which have relation to the Imperial Court, or the district in which it resides, to the direction of the sacrifices, the Imperial stud, and the ceremonial of the Imperial audience-chamber.

The government of the palace is under the direction of a special council, which comprises seven divisions, charged with the provisioning and repairs of the palace, the salaries and punishments for offences committed in it, the receipt of the revenues of the farms, and the superintendence of the flocks and herds of the private domain.

Three great scientific establishments are attached to the court: the National College, where the sons of the great dignitaries are educated; the Imperial College of Astronomy, charged with the astronomical and astrological observations, and the preparation of the annual almanack; and the College of Medicine. Eight hundred guards are attached to the person of the Emperor, and the military service of the capital is confided to the generals of the "Eight Banners;" a corps composed of Mantchoo, Mongol, and Chinese soldiers, the direct descendants of the army that conquered China in 1643-4. The numerous body of eunuchs employed in the palace, and who, under the preceding dynasty played so active a part in the revolutions of which the Chinese Empire has so often been the theatre, is at present reduced to total inactivity.

Under the minority of *Khang-hi*, the second Emperor of the Mantchoo dynasty, the four regents, on whom the government devolved, destroyed the authority of the eunuchs.

Their first act was to pass an express law (which they had en-

graved on plates of iron of a thousand pounds weight) prohibiting all Mantchoo princes for the future from elevating eunuchs to any sort of office or dignity. This law has been faithfully observed, and it is perhaps one of the principal causes to which we may attribute the peace and tranquillity China has enjoyed for so long a time.

The provincial administration is constituted with as much vigour and regularity as that of the whole Empire. Every province is governed by a *Tsoung-tou*, or governor-general, whom the Europeans are in the habit of calling viceroy, and also by a *Fou-youen*, or sub-governor. The Tsoung-fou has the general control of all civil and military affairs. The Fou-youen exercises a similar kind of authority, but is more specially charged with the civil administration, which is divided into five departments; namely, the executive, the literary, that of the salt duties, of the commissariat, and commerce.

The executive department is directed by two superior officers, of whom one undertakes the civil administration properly so called, the other that of criminal law. Under the inspection of these officers, who render an account to the governor and under-governor, every province is divided into prefectures, administered by civil officers, whose functions correspond with those of our prefects and sub-prefects.

The Chinese distinguish, first, the great prefectures named *Fou*, which have a special administration under the inspection of the superior government of the province; secondly, the prefecture called *Tcheou*, the functionaries of which depend sometimes on the provincial administration, and sometimes on that of the grand prefecture; and, finally, the sub-prefecture *Hien*, below both the Fou and the Tcheou. Each of these three, the Fou and the Tcheou and the Hien, possess a kind of chief town, surrounded by walls and fortifications, where the authorities reside.

These are the towns of the first, second, and third order, of which mention is so often made in the accounts of the Missionaries.

The chief officers of the prefectures and sub-prefectures are charged with the collection of the taxes and the police duty.

Secondly. The literary department of every province is conducted by a director of instruction, who delegates his authority to the principal professor residing in the chief towns of the prefecture and sub-prefectures. They have under them secondary masters, who are distributed throughout the cantons. Every year the director of instruction makes a tour to examine students and confer the first literary degree. Every three years examiners are sent

from the academy of the *Han-lin*, at Pekin, to preside over the extraordinary examinations, and confer the second literary degree; and after that the literary graduates have to go to Pekin to pass their examination for the third degree.

Thirdly. The department of the salt duties has under its inspection the salt-marshes, as well as the reservoirs and wells, and also has to undertake the transport of the salt.

Fourthly. The department of the commissariat has to attend to the preservation of the corn in which the greater part of the taxes is paid, and to effect its transport to the capital.

Fifthly. The department of commerce has to collect the dues in the sea-ports and on the navigable rivers. The maintenance of the dikes on the Yellow River is entrusted to a special board, which forms, in the provinces of *Tchi*, *Chan-toung* and *Ho-nan*, a body independent of the provincial administration.

The military government of each province, which is placed, like the civil administration, under the authority of the viceroy, has the command of the land and sea forces. In general, the Chinese make little distinction between the two services, and the several ranks have the same names in both. The generals in the Chinese army are called *Ti-tou;* they are sixteen in number, and two belong exclusively to the marine force.

These generals have each their head-quarters, where they collect the greater part of their brigade, and they distribute the rest through the different posts under their command. Besides these, various fortresses of the Empire are occupied by Tatar troops, commanded by a *Tsiang-kiung*, who obeys no one but the Emperor, and whose business it is to watch over and keep in respect the high civil functionaries, who might be meditating treason or revolt. The admirals (*Ti-tou*) and vice-admirals (*Tsoung-ping*) reside constantly on shore, and leave the command of their squadrons to the subordinate officers.

Below these superior officers, in the various branches of the administration, is an enormous mass of subaltern functionaries, whose names and titles are scrupulously inscribed in the "Book of Places." This kind of Imperial almanack, which is printed anew every three months, and is perfectly authentic, would give an excellent idea of the entire *personnel* of Chinese administration.

From this slight sketch of the political system of the Empire, it will readily be perceived, that, absolute as the government is, it is not on that account necessarily tyrannical. If it were, it would probably long since have ceased to exist; for it is not easy to conceive that three hundred millions of men could be ruled arbi-

trarily and despotically for many successive centuries, let them be ever so apathetic and brutalised — and assuredly the Chinese are neither the one nor the other.

To maintain order amidst these terrific masses of people, nothing less was needed than that powerful system of centralisation which was invented by the founders of the Chinese monarchy, and which the numerous revolutions by which it has been agitated have only modified, without ever disturbing from the foundations.

Under shelter of these strong, energetic, and, one may say, learnedly combined institutions, the Chinese have been able to live in peace, and enjoy some tolerable sort of happiness, which, after all, is perhaps the most that man in this world can reasonably pretend to.

The annals of China resemble those of most other nations; they contain a mixture of good and evil — an alternation of peaceable and happy periods, with others that were agitated and miserable; governments probably will never be found perfect, till the day when men shall be born free from faults.

It is impossible, however, to disguise from one's self, that the Chinese do appear at present to have arrived at one of those epochs in which the evil has gained the ascendant over the good. Morality, arts, industry, all seem to be on the decline, and poverty and destitution are making rapid progress.

We have seen the most frightful corruption penetrating the whole mass of society — magistrates selling justice to the highest bidder; Mandarins of every degree, instead of protecting the people, oppressing and pillaging them by every means in their power.

But ought these disorders and abuses that have glided into the exercise of power, to be attributed to the form of the Chinese government? One can hardly think that. These abuses depend mostly on causes that we shall have occasion to point out in the course of our narrative; but however that may be, it cannot be disputed, that the mechanism of the Chinese government deserves to be studied carefully, and without prejudice, by the politicians of Europe.

We must not wholly despise the Chinese; there may be even much that is admirable and instructive in their ancient and curious institutions, based upon literary qualification, by which it has been found possible to grant, in the communes, universal suffrage to three hundred millions of men, and to render every distinction accessible to all classes. During our stay at Tching-tou-fou, we had an opportunity not only of making acquaintance

with the high functionaries of the city, but of studying also the manners and habits of the Chinese Mandarin in private life, and in the bosom of his family. The magistrate in whose house we were lodged, was named *Pao-ngan*, that is, "Hidden Treasure." He was a man of about fifty years of age, of a fine figure, robust health, and plump enough to obtain the frequent compliments of his colleagues. His strongly marked features, brown complexion, thick moustache, guttural pronunciation, and continual complaints of the heat, pointed him out as a native of the north. He was, in fact, from the province of *Chan-si;* his father had held some high offices, but he himself had never been able to rise above the simple magistracy, and even that he had attained only a few years before. He took good care not to attribute this small progress to want of success in the literary examinations; but, like most other men, preferred laying the blame on the injustice of men, and his own bad star, which took a pleasure in throwing him out of the road to honour and fortune. If you would believe him, his name was most exactly descriptive, and he was, in the full extent of the term, a "Hidden Treasure."

Although somewhat inclined to doleful lamentation, Pao-ngan was, on the whole, a very good fellow, and took the trials and vicissitudes of this nether world pretty easily. He had come into office rather late, and only when his days were on the decline; but he certainly did his utmost to make up for lost time.

He loved law to the bottom of his heart, and never failed to make the most of it. He had two or three kinds of myrmidons constantly employed in rummaging up, in all quarters of the town, all the little affairs that could be brought within his jurisdiction, and his good humour increased with the number he had on his hands.

Such an eagerness for the fulfilment of duties that are mostly considered troublesome and annoying, could not but appear to us very edifying, and we found ourselves charitably disposed to admire in Pao-ngan his extraordinary passion for justice. But he speedily undeceived us, by very frankly declaring that he wanted money, and that a well managed cause was the best means of procuring it. "If it is allowable," said he, "to make a fortune by trade and commerce, why may one not also grow rich by teaching reason to the people, and developing the principles of justice?"

These not very elevated sentiments are common to all the Mandarins, and they express them openly and without scruple. The administration of justice has become a regular traffic, and the chief cause of this abuse, we really believe, is to be found in the

insufficient remuneration allotted by government to magistrates. It is extremely difficult for them to live in suitable style, with the palanquins, and servants, and the costume suitable to their position, if they have nothing more to meet all these expenses than the slender resources granted to them by the State. Their subordinates have no pay at all, and have to indemnify themselves as well as they can, by exercising their industry on the unlucky suitors who pass through their hands—veritable sheep, from whom every one snatches as much wool as he can tear off, and who are not unfrequently at last completely flayed.

Towards the commencement of the present dynasty, these abuses had become so flagrant, and the complaints on the subject so unanimous throughout the Empire, that the cantons drew up a memorial against the country tribunals, and presented it to the Emperor *Tchang-hi*. The answer was soon given, and a curious one it was. "The Emperor, considering the immense population of the Empire, the great division of territorial property, and the notoriously law-loving character of the Chinese, is of opinion that law-suits would tend to increase, to a frightful amount, if people were not afraid of the tribunals, and if they felt confident of always finding in them ready and perfect justice. As man," continues the Imperial logician, "is apt to delude himself concerning his own interests, contests would be then interminable, and the half of the Empire would not suffice to settle the law-suits of the other half. I desire, therefore, that those who have recourse to the tribunals should be treated without any pity, and in such a manner that they shall be disgusted with law, and tremble to appear before a magistrate. In this manner the evil will be cut up by the roots; the good citizens, who may have difficulties among themselves, will settle them like brothers, by referring to the arbitration of some old man, or the mayor of the commune. As for those who are troublesome, obstinate, and quarrelsome, let them be ruined in the law-courts—that is the justice that is due to them."

One cannot, perhaps, altogether admit the validity of this Imperial reasoning, but it is nevertheless undoubtedly true, that in China, those who haunt the tribunals, and get themselves ruined, and not unfrequently knocked down also, by the Mandarins, are, with some honourable exceptions, men of a vindictive and malignant character, to whom no counsel can be of service, and who have need to be chastised by their "father and mother."*

* A title given by the Chinese to their magistrates.

Pao-ngan the "Hidden Treasure," for his part, followed scrupulously the gracious instructions of the Emperor Khang-hi. Since he had been installed in his little tribunal, he dreamed of nothing but of fleecing suitors; but it is most likely, nevertheless, that this was not solely with the philanthropic purpose of diminishing their numbers. One day, when we were asking from him some information with respect to the capital of *Sse-lihuen*, he mentioned to us a certain district as being the worst in the town. We supposed, of course, that this abominable quarter was the resort of all sorts of bad characters, but it was precisely the contrary.

"Since I have been in the magistracy," said Pao-ngan, with delightful naïveté, "that district has never given me a single suit; concord reigns among all the families in it."

This excellent magistrate had two sons, who aspired to follow in their father's footsteps, but it seemed likely they would never attain to the honour of placing any kind of ball on their caps. The elder, who was twenty-three years of age, and already the father of a little citizen of the Chinese Empire, who trotted about and prattled very prettily, had an exceedingly stupid though conceited face, which afforded a very just idea of his intellectual pretensions. He had been studying all his life, and was apparently a student still, but the degree of Bachelor was an honour he had not yet attained. His papa, the "Hidden Treasure," frankly admitted that his eldest son was not remarkably clever.

The younger, a lad of seventeen, was pale and feeble, and evidently consumptive, but as amiable and interesting as his elder brother was tiresome. He was well informed too, and far from unintelligent, and he had a soft melancholy tone in his voice that added to the charm of his conversation.

If to this "Hidden Treasure" and his family be added our two guards of honour, the youthful consumer of opium, and the ancient chewer of melon-seeds, a good idea will be formed of the society in which we found ourselves. It was a curious thing enough for two French missionaries to be living thus familiarly with Mandarins in the middle of a great Chinese town, on the confines of Thibet, ten thousand leagues from their own country, whilst their fate was being decided in a discussion between the viceroy of the province and the Court of Pekin.

The life of a Chinese Mandarin appeared to us a very leisurely one. At sunrise, Pao-ngan installed himself on his judge's seat, and passed the first hours of the morning in administering justice, or, more properly speaking, in arranging and legalising the ex-

tortions of his scribes. After this rather superfluous labour came the great affairs of the day, namely, breakfast, dinner and supper. Pao-ngan kept a very good table, as he received an extra allowance on our account; but, ample as it was, the unfortunate man could not, after the third day, resist putting water into the excellent rice-wine, in order to squeeze a little more profit out of us. It seems as if a Chinese really must make use of some kind of fraud and trickery; every unlawful gain has for him such an irresistible attraction. In the intervals between his meals, the occupations of Pao-ngan were not very laborious; he smoked, he drank tea, he amused himself with munching dried fruits, or fragments of sugar-cane; or he dozed upon a divan, or fanned himself with large palm-leaves, or possibly played a game of cards or chess. Then some other Mandarin, as idle as himself, would come sauntering in, and they would sit down together, and mourn over the inconveniences and toils of public life.

Such was the life of our legal functionary. We never surprised him so much as a single time with a pen or a book in his hand.

It may be supposed that all Chinese official personages are not precisely like Pao-ngan. We have known some who were, on the contrary, active, intelligent, and studious, and constantly stimulated by the hope of advancement in their career.

During our residence in this family, we used, when we became too weary of our habitual company, to go and take refuge with a personage who passed the greater part of the day at the house. This was a venerable graduate of letters, the tutor of the "Hidden Treasure's" children. We used to talk to him of Europe, and he, in return, told us stories of China, which he seasoned plentifully with sentences from the classic authors of his country. This learned Chinese resembled very much those erudite personages of former days whose conversation was always bristling with quotations from Latin and Greek. In France the race is almost extinct, but it is still flourishing in full vigour in China. The man of learning is accustomed to present himself with a considerable amount of easy assurance, indeed with not a little vanity and pomposity, so convinced is he of his own value.

He is the diapason of every conversation, for he is erudite, and moreover a fine speaker. His vocal organ is mostly of a marvellous flexibility, and he has the habit of accompanying his words with much stately gesticulation, of emphasising many of them, and indulging in great variety of intonation.

His language, being in a very sublime style, is not always very intelligible; but that is perhaps rather an advantage, as it gives

him an opportunity of assisting the comprehension of his hearers, by describing with his finger in the air, explanatory characters. If any one else begins to talk in his presence, he listens to him with a shake of the head, and a compassionate smile that seems to say, "Well! Well! you have not the gift of eloquence."

But when one of these erudite gentlemen fills the office of tutor, although at bottom he may have the same amount of conceit, he is forced to put on a little modesty over it; for he understands very well the imprudence of displaying his pride before those who require his services.

These *magistri* form in China an extremely numerous class. They are usually men of no fortune, who not having been able to attain to the dignity of the mandarinate, are obliged to resort to this method of obtaining their living. It is not necessary to have passed all the examinations in order to become a *magister*, for in China education is quite free, and any one is at liberty to set up a school, without the government interfering with him in any way whatever. The interest a father must feel in the education of his children is supposed to be a sufficient guarantee for his choice of a master.

The heads of the villages and of the different districts of the cities assemble when they wish to found a school, and deliberate on the choice of a master, and the salary that is to be allowed him.

They then prepare a local habitation for it and open the classes. If the *magister* does not continue to please those who have chosen him, they dismiss him, and choose another. The government has only an indirect influence over the schools, through the examinations of those who aspire to enter the corporation of letters. They are obliged to study the classical authors upon which they have to be examined; but the uniformity that is seen in Chinese schools is rather the result of custom, and general agreement of the people, than of legal prescription. In our Catholic schools the Chinese professors explain the Christian doctrine freely to their pupils, without any other control than that of the vicar apostolic or the Missionary. The rich are very much in the habit of having for their children private tutors, who give them lessons at home, and often lodge in the family.

Of all countries in the world China is assuredly the one in which primary instruction is most widely diffused. There is no little village, not even a group of farms, in which a teacher is not to be found. He resides most frequently in the Pagoda; and for his maintenance he has usually the revenue of a foundation, or sometimes a kind of tithe paid by the farmers after the harvest.

The schools are rather less numerous in the northern provinces; it almost seems as if the intellects of the people were rendered duller and heavier by the rigour of the climate.

The people of the south, on the contrary, are acute and lively, and devote themselves with ardour to literary studies. With some few exceptions, every Chinese knows how to read and write, at least sufficiently for the ordinary occasions of life. Thus the workmen, the peasants even, are capable of taking notes concerning their daily affairs, of carrying on their own correspondence, of reading the proclamations of the Mandarins, and often also the productions of the current literature.

Primary instruction has even made its way into the floating dwellings, which cover by thousands the rivers, lakes, and canals of the Celestial Empire. One is sure of finding in their little barques, a writing-desk, an arithmetical machine, an annual register, some of the little brushes that supply the place of pens, and some pamphlets which in their moments of leisure the mariners amuse themselves by deciphering. The Chinese tutor is charged not only with the instruction, but also with the education of his pupils. He has to teach them the principles of politeness, to train them to the practice of the ceremonial of public and private life, to show them the various modes of salutation, and the deportment they have to observe towards their relations, their superiors, and their equals.

The Chinese have been much reproached for their absurd attachment to frivolous ceremonies, and the minutiæ of etiquette. People have been pleased to represent them as always moving in a grave solemn manner, after the fashion of automata, executing in their friendly salutations only certain manœuvres prescribed by the law, and addressing each other in stiff formulas of courtesy learnt by heart from the ritual. The Chinese of the lower class, the palanquin bearers, and street porters of great towns, have been supposed to be always prostrating themselves to each other, and asking ten thousand pardons, after having been abusing or even knocking each other down. These extravagances are not really to be met with in China; they are to be found only in the accounts of Europeans, who seem to think themselves obliged, in speaking of a country so little known, to relate many strange things. Setting aside all exaggeration, however, it is certain that urbanity is among the Chinese a distinctive sign of national character.

A fondness for polite and decorous observance may be traced among them from the remotest antiquity, and their ancient philosophers never fail to recommend to the people a strict observance

of the precepts established for the relations of society. Confucius said that ceremonies are the symbols of virtue, and destined to preserve it, to recall it to memory, and even sometimes to supply its place. These principles being among the earliest inculcated by schoolmasters on the minds of their pupils, it is not surprising that we find in all ranks of society manners which display more or less of that politeness which is the basis of Chinese education; and even the country people and peasants certainly treat each other with more respect and decorum than would be manifested among the laborious classes of Europe.

In their official reports, and on solemn occasions, the Chinese have certainly too much of stiffness and bombastic grimace, and are too much the slaves of ceremonious etiquette. The regulation tears and groans of their funeral ceremonies, their emphatic protestations of affection, respect, and devotion to people they despise and detest, the pressing invitations to dinner, given on condition of not being accepted; all these are excesses and abuses common enough, but which were even noticed and blamed by Confucius himself. This rigid observer of "The Rites," has somewhere said that, with respect to ceremonies, it is better to be a miser than a prodigal, especially if in practising them one has not the feeling in the heart that alone confers on them merit and importance.

Apart from these public demonstrations, in which there is often a good deal of constraint and affectation, the Chinese are not deficient in openness and freedom of deportment. When they have pulled off their satin boots, and laid aside their robes of state and their official hats, they become men of the world; and in the habitual intercourse of daily life they know how to release themselves from the bonds of etiquette, and indulge in social recreation, in which the conversation is seasoned, as among ourselves, with gaiety and pleasant trifling. Friends meet in an unceremonious way to tea or warm wine, or perhaps to smoke the excellent tobacco of Leao-tong; and sometimes on such occasions they amuse themselves by guessing riddles and making puns.

The chief branch of instruction in the Chinese schools is that of reading and writing, or painting the Chinese characters. To exercise the hand of the pupil, they oblige him to practise, first the elementary forms that enter into the composition of the letter, and then to proceed gradually to more complicated combinations. When he can make a firm and easy stroke with the pencil, beautiful examples of various styles of writing are given to him to copy. The master corrects the work of the pupil in red ink, improving the badly drawn letters, and pointing out the various beauties and

imperfections in the copy. The Chinese set great value on fine writing; and a good calligrapher, or, as they say, "an elegant pencil," is always much admired.

For the knowledge and good pronunciation of the character, the master, at the beginning of the lesson, repeats a certain number to each pupil, according to his capacity. They then all return to their places, repeating their lesson in a chanting tone, and rocking themselves backwards and forwards. The uproar and confusion of a Chinese school, in which every pupil is vociferating his own particular monosyllables in his own particular tone, without at all troubling himself about his neighbour, may easily be imagined. Whilst they are thus chanting and rocking about, the master of the school, like the leader of a band, keeps his ears pricked and attentive to all that is going on, shouting out his amendments from time to time to those who are missing the true intonation. As soon as the pupil thinks he has his lesson perfectly impressed on his memory, he goes up to the master, makes a low bow, presents his book, turns his back, and repeats what he has learnt. This is what they call *pey-chou*, "turning the back on a book;" that is, saying a lesson.

The Chinese character is so large, and so easy to distinguish even at a great distance, that this method does not appear superfluous, if the point is to ascertain whether the pupil is really repeating from memory. The bawling and rocking themselves about is considered to lessen the fatigue of study.

The first book that is placed in the hands of scholars is a very ancient and popular work, entitled *San-dze-king* or Sacred Trimetrical Book. The author has named it thus because it is divided into little couplets, each verse of which is composed of three characters or words. The hundred and seventy-eight verses contained in the San-dze-king form a kind of encyclopædia, in which children find a concise and admirable summary of the chief branches of knowledge that constitute Chinese science.

It treats of the nature of man, of the various modes of education, of the importance of the social duties, of numbers and their origin of the three great powers, of the four seasons, of the five cardinal points, of the five elements, of the five constant virtues, of the six kinds of corn, of the six classes of domestic animals, of the seven dominant passions, of the eight notes of music, of the nine degrees of relationship, of the ten relative duties, of studies and academical compositions, of general history and the succession of dynasties; and the work concludes with reflections and examples on the necessity and importance of study in general. It

may well be imagined that a treatise of this kind, well learnt by the pupils, and properly applied by the master, must greatly develope the intellects of Chinese children, and favour their natural taste for the acquisition of serious and positive knowledge. The San-dze-king is worthy in all respects of the immense popularity it enjoys. The author, a disciple of Confucius, commences with a distich, the profound and traditional sense of which is very striking — *Jen-dze-tsou-sin-pen-chan*, "Man in the beginning was of a nature essentially holy." But it is probable that the Chinese understand very little the tendency and the consequences of the thought expressed in these two lines.

A learned Christian has composed for the schools of our missions a little theological encyclopædia on the model of the San-dze-king. The verses are formed of four words; and it is for this reason he has given it the title Sse-dze-king, or Sacred Book in Four Characters.

After the trimetrical encyclopædia the *Sse-chou*, or Four Classical Books, are placed in the hands of the pupils. Of these we will endeavour to give some brief idea. The first is the *Ta-hio*, or Grand Study; a kind of treatise on politics and morals, composed from the very concise text of Confucius, by one of his disciples; and the grand principle inculcated in it is self-improvement. These are the words of Confucius: —

I.

"The law of the Grand Study, or practical philosophy, consists in developing the luminous principle of reason, which we have received from Heaven, for the regeneration of man, and in placing his final destiny in perfection, or the sovereign good.

II.

"We must first know the goal towards which we are tending, or our definite destination. This being known, we may afterwards maintain the calmness and tranquillity of our minds. The mind being calm and tranquil, we may afterwards enjoy that unalterable repose which nothing can trouble. Having then attained to the enjoyment of the unalterable repose which nothing can trouble, we may afterwards meditate and form our judgment on the essence of things; and having formed our judgments of the essence of things, we may then attain to the desired perfection.

III.

"The beings of nature have causes and effects; human actions, principles and consequences. To know causes and effects, principles and consequences, is to approach very nearly to the rational method by which perfection is attained.

IV.

"The ancient princes who desired to develope in their states the luminous principle of reason that we have received from Heaven, endeavoured first to

govern well their kingdoms; those who desired to govern well their kingdoms, endeavoured first to keep good order in their families; those who desired to keep good order in their families, endeavoured first to correct themselves; those who desired to correct themselves, endeavoured first to give uprightness to their souls; those who desired to give uprightness to their souls, endeavoured first to render their intentions pure and sincere; those who desired to render their intentions pure and sincere, endeavoured to perfect, as much possible, their moral knowledge, and examine thoroughly their principles of action.

V.

"The principles of action being thoroughly examined, the moral knowledge attains the highest degree of perfection; the moral knowledge having attained the highest degree of perfection, the intentions are rendered pure and sincere; the intentions being rendered pure and sincere, the soul is penetrated with probity and uprightness, and the mind is afterwards corrected and improved; the mind being corrected and improved, the family is afterwards better managed; the family being better managed, the kingdom is afterwards well governed; and the kingdom being well governed, the world enjoys harmony and peace.

VI.

"All men, the most elevated in rank, as well as the most humble and obscure, are equally bound to perform their duty. The correction and amelioration of one's self, or self-improvement, is the basis of all progress, and of all moral development.

VII.

"It is not in the nature of things but that whatever has its basis in disorder and confusion, should also have what necessarily results from that. To treat lightly what is the principal or most important thing, and seriously what is only secondary, that is a method of action we ought never to follow."

As we have said, the Book of the Grand Study is composed of the preceding text, with a commentary in ten chapters by a disciple of Confucius. The commentator exerts himself especially to apply the doctrine of his master to political government, which Confucius defines as what is *just* and *right*, and which he supposes founded on the consent of the people. The formula in the Grand Study is as follows: —

"Obtain the affection of the people, and thou wilt obtain the empire!
Lose the affection of the people, and thou wilt lose the empire!"

The Book of the Grand Study concludes in these words: —

"If those who govern states only think of amassing riches for their persona use, they will infallibly attract towards them depraved men; these depraved men will make the sovereign believe that they are good and virtuous; and these depraved men will govern the kingdom. But the administration o these unworthy ministers will call down the chastisements of Heaven, and excite the vengeance of the people. When matters have reached this point what ministers, were they ever so good and virtuous, could avert misfor

tune? Therefore, those who govern kingdoms ought never to make their private fortune out of the public revenues; but their only riches should be justice and equity."

The second classical book, *Tchoung-young*, or the Invariable Centre, is a treatise on the conduct of wise men in life. It has been edited by a disciple of Confucius, according to instructions received from the lips of the master himself. The system of morals contained in this book is based on the principle, that virtue is always at an equal distance from two extremes — *In medio consistit virtus.* This harmonious centre, *Ching-ho*, is the source of the true, the beautiful, and the good.

I.

"The disciple *Sse-lou* inquires of his master concerning the strength of man.

II.

"Confucius replies: 'Is it concerning manly strength in northern or in southern countries that you wish to inquire? Is it of your own strength?

III.

"To have gentle and benevolent manners for the instruction of men — to have compassion towards those madmen who revolt against reason,—this is the manly strength proper to southern countries; it is that which the wise endeavour to attain.

IV.

"To make one's couch on steel blades and skins of wild beasts — to contemplate without shuddering the approach of death, — this is the manly strength proper to northern countries, and it is that which the brave endeavour to attain.

V.

"But much stronger and much grander is the power of soul belonging to the sage who lives always at peace with men, and who does not allow himself to be corrupted by passion. Much stronger and grander is the power of soul in him who keeps always in the straight path, equally distant from the two extremes. Much stronger and grander is the power of soul in him who, when his country is in the enjoyment of a good government, which is his work, does not allow himself to be corrupted or blinded by a foolish pride. Much stronger and grander is the power of soul in him who, when his country, being lawless, has not a good government, remains immovable in his virtue till death."

Confucius, in his Invariable Centre, as in his other treatises, endeavours to apply his ethical principles to politics. These are the conditions on which he allows to sovereigns the right of governing nations and giving them institutions: —

I.

"It is only the man supremely holy, who, by the faculty of knowing thoroughly, and comprehending perfectly, the primitive laws of living beings, is worthy of possessing supreme authority and commanding men,— who, by possessing a soul, grand, firm, constant, and imperturbable, is capable of making

justice and equity reign,— who, by his faculty of being always honest, simple, upright, grave, and just, is capable of attracting respect and veneration,— who, by his faculty of being clothed with the ornaments of the mind and the talents procured by assiduous study, and by the enlightenment that is given by an exact investigation of the most hidden things and the most subtle principles,— is capable of discerning with accuracy the true from the false, and good from evil.

II.

"His faculties are so ample, so vast, so profound, that he is like an immense spring, whence all issues in due season.

III.

"They are vast and extensive as the heavens; the hidden source whence they flow is deep as the abyss. Let this man supremely holy appear with his virtues, and his powerful faculties, and the nations will not fail to have faith in his words. Let him act, and the nations will not fail to be in joy.

IV.

"It is thus that the renown of his virtues will be like an ocean, inundating the empire in every part. It will extend even to the barbarians of the north and the south. Wherever vessels or chariots can reach,— wherever the power of human industry can penetrate,— in all the places which the heavens cover with their immense canopy,— on all points that the earth contains, which the sun and the moon enlighten with their rays,—which the dew and the clouds of morning fertilise,— all human beings who live and breathe can never fail to love and to revere him."

The third classical book, *Lun-yu*, or Philosophical Conversations, is a collection of maxims put together in rather a confused manner, and of recollections of the discourses of Confucius with his disciples. Among a great number of common-places on morals and politics, are some profound thoughts, and some curious details concerning the character and manners of Confucius, who seems to have been something of an original. Thus, the Lun-yu informs us that the master, in introducing his guests, kept his arms stretched out like the wings of a bird; that he would never eat meat that was not cut in a straight line; that if the mat on which he was to sit down was not regularly placed, he would not take it; that he would point to nothing with his fingers, &c.

Finally, the fourth classical book is that of *Meng-tze*, or Mincius, as he is called by Europeans. This work, divided into two parts, contains the summary of the counsels addressed by this celebrated philosopher to the princes of his time and his disciples. Mincius has been decorated by his countrymen with the title of Second Sage, Confucius being the first; and they render to him in the great Hall of the Learned, the same honours as to Confucius. This is what a Chinese author says of the Book of Mincius:— "The subjects treated in this work are of various natures. In one

part are examined the virtues of individual life and of domestic relations; in another, the order of affairs. Here are investigated the duties of superiors, from the sovereign to the lowest magistrate, for the attainment of good government. There the toils of students, labourers, artisans, traders, are exhibited; and in the course of the work the laws of the physical world, of the heavens and the earth, the mountains and rivers, of birds, quadrupeds, fish, insects, plants, trees, are occasionally described. A great number of affairs that Mincius managed, in the course of his life, in his intercourse with men, his occasional discourses with people of rank, his instructions to his pupils, his explanations of books, ancient and modern, — all these things are incorporated in this publication.

"It is a collection of historical facts and of the words of ancient ages, uttered for the instruction of mankind."

M. Abel Remusat has thus characterised the two most celebrated philosophers of China: —

"The style of Meng-tze, less elevated and less concise than that of the prince of letters, Confucius, is more flowery and elegant, and also not deficient in nobleness. The form of dialogue, which he has preserved in his Philosophical Conversations with the great persons of his times, allows of more variety than one can expect to find in the apophthegms and maxims of Confucius. The character of their philosophy also differs widely. Confucius is always grave, even austere. He extols the virtuous, of whom he draws an ideal portrait, and only speaks of the vicious with cold indignation. Meng-tze, with the same love of virtue, seems to have more contempt for, than hatred of vice. He attacks it by the force of reason, and does not disdain even to employ the weapon of ridicule. His manner of arguing approaches the irony attributed to Socrates. He does not contend with his adversaries; but endeavours, while granting their premises, to draw from them absurd consequences, that he may cover them with confusion. He does not even spare the princes and great men of his time, who often only feigned to consult him, in order to have an opportunity of boasting of their conduct, or to obtain from him eulogiums that they supposed themselves to merit. Nothing can be more piquant than the answers he sometimes gives them on such occasions, and nothing more opposed to the too generally entertained opinion of the baseness and servility of Orientals, and especially of the Chinese.

"Meng-tze does not resemble Aristippus so much as Diogenes, but without violating decency and decorum. His liveliness does

sometimes appear of rather too tart a quality, but he is always inspired by zeal for the public good.

"The pupils in Chinese schools learn these books at first by heart, without troubling themselves with the sense or meaning of the author; and if they attach any ideas to his words, they are indebted merely to their own sagacity. It is only when they are capable of repeating the whole, from one end to the other, that the master sets to work, with the assistance of innumerable commentaries, to develope the text, word by word, and give the necessary explanation; and the philosophical opinions of Confucius and Meng-tze are then expounded, in a manner more or less superficial, according to the age and capacity of the pupil."

After the four classical books, the Chinese study the five sacred books, *King*, which are the most ancient monuments of Chinese literature, and contain the fundamental principles of the earliest creeds and customs. The first in date, the most renowned, but the least intelligible of these sacred books is the Book of Changes, *y-King*. This is a treatise on divination, founded on the combinations of sixty-four lines (some entire, others broken), and called *koua*, the discovery of which is attributed to *Fou-hi*, the founder of Chinese civilization. Fou-hi is said to have found these mysterious lines, which he says are capable of explaining all things, on the shell of a tortoise. But Confucius, whose capacity and talents were so extraordinary, studied these enigmatical *koua* very assiduously, and went through much labour in editing the y-King, without being able to throw much light upon the matter. After Confucius, the number of writers who have had the weakness to occupy themselves seriously with the y-King, is almost incredible. The Imperial Catalogue enumerates more than 1450 treatises, in the form of memoirs, or commentaries, upon this famous, but whimsical work.

The *Chou-king*, or Book of History, is the second sacred book. Confucius has collected in this important work the historical recollections of the first dynasties of China as far as the eighth century before our era. It contains the speeches addressed by several emperors of these dynasties to their great officers, and furnishes a great number of precious documents concerning the first ages of the Chinese nation.

The third sacred book is the *Che-king*, or Book of Verses; a collection, made also by Confucius, of ancient national and official songs, from the eighteenth to the third century before our era; and there is found in it very interesting and authentic information on the ancient manners of China. The Book of Verses is often

quoted and commented on in the philosophical writings of Meng-tze and of Confucius, who recommends it to his disciples. He says, in the Lun-yu, "My dear disciples, why do you not study the Book of Verses? The Book of Verses is proper for elevating your sentiments and ideas; it is fitted for forming your judgment by the contemplation of things; it is good for uniting men in mutual harmony, and for exciting regret without resentment."

The fourth sacred book is the *Li-ki*, or Book of Rites. The original was lost in the conflagration of ancient books ordered by the Emperor *Thsin-che-Hoang*, at the end of the third century before our era. The present ritual is a collection of fragments; the most ancient of which do not appear to date from an earlier epoch than that of Confucius.

Finally, the fifth sacred book is the *Tchun-thsiou*, or the Book of Spring and Autumn, written by Confucius; and which takes its name from the two seasons of the year in which it was commenced and finished. It contains the annals of the little kingdom of *Lou*, the native country of this philosopher, from the year 292 to 480 before our era. Confucius wrote it to recall the princes of his time to respect for ancient customs, by pointing out the misfortunes that had happened to their predecessors since these customs had fallen into desuetude.

These five sacred and four classical books are the basis of all science among the Chinese. What one finds in them is, it must be confessed, but little suited to the tastes or wants of Europeans. It would be vain to seek in them for scientific ideas; and, with some truths of great importance in politics and morals, one is confounded by finding mingled the grossest errors and the most absurd fables. Chinese instruction nevertheless, taken on the whole, tends wonderfully to create in the mind an attachment to ancient customs, and a profound respect for authority; two things which have always been the twin pillars of Chinese society, and which alone can serve to explain the duration of this ancient civilisation. We shall not enter here into any further details concerning the education and literature of the Chinese, since we shall have to return to the subject on several other occasions.

We had been about fifteen days at Tching-tou-fou, and, as we were beginning to be exceedingly tired of it, we managed to intimate to the viceroy our desire to resume our journey. He replied very graciously, that it would give him pleasure if we would prolong our period of repose, but that we were entirely free, and might ourselves fix the day of our departure. The Magistrate Pao-ngan did his utmost to detain us, and put in operation all the

resources of his insinuating and pathetic eloquence, conjuring us to stay a little longer, if we would not "rend his heart." We on our side had to explain to him the depth of grief into which we should be plunged, when we should be separated from him by lakes and rivers, plains and mountains. Nevertheless, in spite of this reciprocal wish to remain for ever together, it was decided that we should set off in two days. Various little intrigues immediately began ; all the Mandarins who were at liberty set about manœuvring to obtain the office of our escort, and their visits from that moment succeeded each other without interruption. It was a perfect avalanche of white and gilt balls which fell all at once into the halls of The Hidden Treasure. All these candidates were, if you could take their word for it, absolutely perfect men ; — they possessed in the highest degree the five cardinal virtues, and were also perfectly familiar with all the laws of politeness ; they all understood how much strangers of our importance must have need of care and attention, during the toilsome journey we were about to undertake. The countries we were about to traverse were well known to them, and we might rely on their experience and devotion. They showed this eagerness to accompany us, merely because a mission so glorious would render their names illustrious, and their lives permanently happy.

What all these fine things really meant was, that there was a little fortune to be gained by him who should have the chance of escorting us. According to the benevolent intentions of the viceroy, we were to travel like government officers of rank. In that case extraordinary contributions would be levied on all the countries through which we passed, to provide for our expenses and those of our escort ; and the gentlemen who desired so greatly to be our conductors thought to profit by our inexperience in such matters, and retain for their own share the greater part of the funds that would be allotted for the purpose by the tribunals on our road. There exist very minute regulations concerning these sorts of journeys ; but they thought we should know nothing about them. We took very good care, however, not to choose our conductors ourselves ; we preferred leaving the appointment to the superior authorities, reserving in this manner the right of complaining if things did not afterwards turn out to our satisfaction. We should want, it appeared, two Mandarins ; one of the literary class who would be the soul of the expedition, and one military, with fifteen soldiers, to secure the tranquillity and good order of our march.

On the evening before our departure, our friend the Prefect of

the Garden of Flowers paid us an official visit, to present the two successful candidates. The literary candidate, named Ting, was of the middle size, very thin, marked with the smallpox, and worn out with the use of opium; a great talker, and exceedingly ignorant. In our first interview he was careful to inform us that he was very much devoted to *Kao-wang*, a kind of divinity of the Chinese pantheon; and that he knew a great number of prayers, and especially some very long litanies, which he was in the habit of reciting every day. We are persuaded that it was with the intention of being particularly agreeable that they favoured us with this learned Mandarin and his long litanies; and he was, it must be confessed, something of a curiosity.

The military Mandarin, for his part, knew no prayers at all. He was a young man with a broad face, and a constitution naturally robust, but already suffering from the effects of opium. His manners were more polished and courteous than those of his colleague, and he even appeared to have made more progress in literary culture.

On the day of our departure we went at a very early hour to pay our farewell visit to the viceroy. This reception was not solemn and stately as on the former occasion; we had no music, and there was no assemblage of the civil and military officers of the town. We were accompanied only by the Prefect of the Garden of Flowers, who remained standing at the door of the cabinet in which we were received.

The same simplicity appeared in the deportment of the viceroy. He spoke to us with much kindness, and was good enough to enter into the most minute details on the subject of the orders he had given for our treatment on the road; and in order that we might be fully aware of our claims, he presented us with a copy of the regulations that our conductors were bound to see executed.

During this visit the viceroy mentioned in confidence a circumstance that surprised us, and which tends to show that the Chinese are by no means as good mathematicians and astronomers as they are in Europe generally supposed to be. He told us that the government would soon find itself in great embarrassment on account of the necessity of a revision of the calendar, which was now on longer accurate. We knew very well that the first missionaries, at the epoch of their favour at court, had been complaisant enough to correct many grave errors that were found to exist in the Chinese computation of the lunar year, as well as to make for the government a kind of perpetual calendar for a considerable period. This period, however, was now nearly over, and the Office of Mathema-

tics at Pekin had humbly declared itself incapable of preparing another.

The viceroy, who had probably received particular instructions on the subject from the Emperor, asked us whether there would be no means of engaging the missionaries to labour in the reform of the calendar? We replied that if the Emperor invited them to do so, they would probably have no motive for refusing his request. We took this opportunity, also, of reminding this high dignitary of the services formerly rendered to the Empire by the missionaries, in directing the works of the Mathematical Office, preparing maps of the provinces, and of tributary countries; negotiating various treaties with the Russians; and in a number of other occasions in which they showed as much talent as devotion to the Chinese government. "How many missionaries," said we, "have quitted their country to come and devote themselves entirely to the Chinese." And the Chinese, in what manner have they rewarded so many toils, and such great sacrifices? When they thought they no longer had need of the missionaries, they drove them ignominiously from their country; they put others to death; they seized on the establishments which they had erected at great expense; they even outraged, quite recently, the tombs of those learned and virtuous persons who excited the admiration of the celebrated Emperor Khang-hi.

When we spoke of the recent profanation of these tombs, the viceroy appeared struck with astonishment. The French missionaries formerly possessed, in the environs of Pekin, a magnificent piece of enclosed ground, that had been given to them as a burial place by the Emperor Khang-hi. There repose many of our countrymen, who died thus at the distance of ten thousand leagues from their country, after having worn out their lives in sufferings and privations in the midst of a people who never knew how to appreciate either their virtue or their knowledge.

We visited this enclosure, known among the Chinese as the French Burial Ground, several times, and could never do so without feeling our hearts beat as if we were about to set foot once more upon our native soil. This is, in fact, French soil; it is an affecting and precious colony, conquered in the midst of the Chinese Empire, by our departed brethren. The site of it is one of the finest to be found in Pekin. The walls are still in good preservation, but the house, and the wood-work, which is in a style half European half Chinese, are greatly in need of repair. In the middle of a vast garden now running wild, there is a grove in which the tombs of the missionaries have been placed by command,

under some lofty forest trees; but as Europeans have now no longer a legal existence in China, the French Burial Ground was entrusted to the care of a Chinese Christian family, since sent into exile in consequence of a recent persecution. The establishment was then sacked and pillaged by the robbers of Pekin.

At present it is in possession of the government, and the heathens lodged in it steal every day whatever they like, — the trees, the materials of the chapel, even the stones from the tombs.

The viceroy, as we said, was struck with astonishment at hearing us speak of the pillage of the Burial Ground, and inquired whether the French government had been informed of it. "Possibly it may have been," we replied; "but if not, we will take care to give the information."

"And if I write to Pekin on the subject, and the Emperor should give orders to restore the sepulchres, will that satisfy the French?"

"They will doubtless be glad to learn that reparation has been made for the injury done to the tombs of their brothers."

The viceroy immediately called for a pencil, wrote some words, and promised, as soon as possible, to address to the Emperor a memorial relative to this affair. We afterwards talked with him a long time about European governments, the Christian religion, and the Imperial decrees obtained by M. de Lagrenée. The worthy old man evidently felt a good deal of anxiety concerning the Mantchou dynasty, and he appeared to understand that an epoch had arrived, in which whether they would or not, the Chinese must modify their ancient institutions, and enter into relations with European powers. Thanks to steam, these are now no longer at so immense a distance from the Celestial Empire.

"I will go to Pekin," said he, "and I will myself speak to the Emperor."

At length the Viceroy put an end to the interview, by addressing us with the customary words, "*I-lou-fou-sing.*" "May the star of happiness accompany your journey." We wished him a long and happy old age, and left him to return to the house of the magistrate, where we were to meet the Mandarins of our escort.*

We found a numerous company, composed of persons with whom we had become acquainted during our stay at Tching-tou-fou: we sat down to table, and Pao-ngan served us up a regular feast

* In 1850, we went from Macao to Pekin, with the intention of seeing the viceroy, whom the Emperor had summoned to remain near his person. But unfortunately, he died just a fortnight before our arrival.

Some short time afterwards the Emperor died also.

according to "the Rites." Very soon the ceremonious formalities of the farewell began. They told us, in all sorts of tones, and with every conceivable variation, that during our residence with them they had annoyed us very much, and rendered our lives extremely unpleasant. On our sides we declared that on the contrary we had the greatest need of their indulgence and their pardon, for we had been most troublesome and exacting guests. Every one of course knew the value of this strange phraseology consecrated by custom, and which does sometimes happen to be a very naïve expression of the truth. At last we entered our palanquins, and the procession, preceded by twelve soldiers armed with rattans, opened for us a passage through a dense throng of curious spectators. All were desirous of getting a glimpse of these famous "Western Devils," who had so strangely become the friends of the viceroy and the Emperor; and of this fact no one could doubt, since instead of strangling us, they allowed us to wear the yellow cap and the red girdle.

CHAP. IV.

Departure from Tching-tou-fou. — Letter thrown into our Palanquin, at the Gate of the Town. — Christianity in China. — Its Introduction in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries. — Monument and Inscription at Si-ngan-fou. — Progress of Christianity in the Fourteenth Century. — Arrival of the Portuguese in China. — Macao. — Father Matthew Ricci. — Departure of the first Chinese Missionaries. — Prosperity of the Religion under the Emperor Khang-hi. — Persecution under the Emperor Young-tching. — Abandonment of the Missions. — Numerous Departures of the New Missionaries. — Glance at the present State of Christianity in China. — Motives of Hostility in the Government towards Christians. — Indifferentism of the Chinese in Matters of Religion. — Honours paid to us on our Road. — Halt at a Communal Palace. — Trickery on the part of Master Ting. — Navigation of the Blue River. — Arrival at Kien-tcheou.

As we reached the southern gate of the town, we remarked among the mass of people assembled there a great number of Christians. They made the sign of the cross to enable us to recognise them, and also to afford us, as well as they could, an expression of sympathy. Their countenances showed satisfaction and confidence; for they had doubtless imagined they saw in the attentions that had been lavished on us by the viceroy and the first magistrates of the town, the percursory signs of the religious liberty, the hope of which had shone for a moment on their path.

Perhaps, also, they might hope that information afforded *vivâ voce* to the representatives of France, concerning the nullity of the Imperial Edicts, would draw forth a protest that might force back the Chinese government into the path of justice and moderation. If such were indeed their hopes on witnessing our departure for Macao, they must have been sadly disappointed; for their situation, instead of improving, became aggravated from day to day.

At the moment when we were passing through the last gate, one of us caught in his palanquin a letter, furtively flung in by a Christian who kept himself crouched in a corner; it was from M. Perocheau, Bishop of Maxula, and vicar apostolic of the province of Sse-tchouen. This zealous and learned prelate spoke to us of numerous local persecutions, which were still desolating his vicariate, and begged us to remind the Mandarins we might meet with on the road of the promises made by the Emperor with respect to the Christians of his Empire.

Our resolution was already taken in that matter, and the recommendation of the venerable elder of the Chinese Bishops could only confirm us the more in it. But unfortunately our efforts had a very small effect.

The Chinese Christian communities are still, as they were before, at the mercy of the Mandarins; and they have now, also, to dread the fanaticism and barbarity of the insurgents. All seems to indicate that the missionaries will long have to sow the divine seed in tears and sorrow. Truly lamentable is this obstinacy of the Chinese people, in rejecting, disdainfully, the treasure of faith that Europe has never ceased to offer with so much zeal, devotion, and perseverance. No other nation has excited such lively solicitude on the part of the Church; no sacrifice has been spared for its sake; and yet it is the one, of all, that has proved most rebellious.

The soil has been prepared and turned in all directions with patience and intelligence; it has been watered by sweat and tears and enriched with the blood of martyrs; the evangelical seed has been sown in it with profusion; the Christian world has poured forth prayers, to draw upon it the blessing of Heaven; and yet it is still as sterile as ever, and the time of the harvest is not yet come: for one cannot give the name of harvest to a few scattered ears, springing up here and there, and gathered in haste, lest they should fall at the first breath of the storm. It would not be impossible, perhaps, to point out the principal causes which hinder the propagation of the Gospel in China; but it will be better to

give, first, a rapid sketch of the various attempts that have been made, at different epochs, to Christianise this vast Empire.

The first efforts to throw the light of faith on the central and eastern parts of Asia were made at a very remote period.

Already, as early as the fifth and sixth centuries, we discover traces of the first missionaries who travelled by land from Constantinople to what they called the Kingdom of Cathay; for it was under this name that China was first known in the West.

These apostles wandered on foot, their staves in their hands, over mountains, along banks of rivers, through forests and deserts, amidst privations and sufferings of every kind, to carry the tidings of salvation to nations unknown to the rest of the world. For a long time it was supposed that the Gospel was not preached in China till a comparatively recent period,—the time when the celebrated and courageous Matthew Ricci penetrated into the Empire in the latter half of the sixteenth century. But the discovery of the monument and inscription at Si-ngan-fou*, the former capital of China, proves incontestably that in the year 635, the Christian religion was known and even flourishing there. This inscription speaks of numerous churches which owed their erection to the piety of the Emperors, and of magnificent titles bestowed on the priest, Olopen†, who is designated as the Sovereign Guardian of the Kingdom of the Great Law; that is to say, Primate of the Christian religion.

In 712, the Bonzes excited a persecution against the Christians, who, however, after some transitory trials, were again triumphant. "Then," according to the inscription, "the religion that had been oppressed for some time, began again to raise its head. The stone of doctrine that had been for a moment thrown off its balance, recovered itself. In the year 744, there was a priest of the kingdom of Ta-thsin‡ who came to China to salute the Emperor; he ordered this priest Sohan, and six others, with the one sent from Ta-thsin, to offer Christian sacrifices in the palace of Him-kim. Then the Emperor ordered them to suspend over the door of the church an inscription written with his own hand. This august tablet shone with a vivid splendour; and that is why all the earth conceived a great respect for religion. All affairs were perfectly well managed, and felicity, arising from religion, was profitable to the human race. Every year the Emperor

* A magnificent fac-simile of this celebrated inscription may be seen in the Imperial Library at Paris.

† There is every reason to believe that *Olopen* was a Syrian.

‡ The Roman Empire was thus designated by the Chinese of this epoch.

Tai-tsoung, on the day of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, presented to the Church celestial perfumes; and he distributed Imperial viands to the Christian multitude, to render the day more remarkable and celebrated. The priest, Y-sou, a great benefactor of the religion, and, at the same time, a great person at court, lieutenant of the Viceroy of So-fan, and Inspector of the palace, to whom the Emperor has presented a religious habit of sky blue, is a man of gentle manners and mind, inclined to all sorts of good. As soon as he had received into his heart the true doctrine, he began to put it in practice. He came to China from a distant country, and he surpasses in industry all those who flourished under the three first dynasties; he understands perfectly the sciences and arts. In the beginning, when he laboured at court, he rendered excellent services to the state, and acquired, in a high degree, the esteem of the Emperor."

"This stone," concludes the inscription, "was prepared and raised in the second year of the reign of Tai-tsoung" (A.D. 781). "At that time the priest Niu-chou, Lord of the Law," (that is to say, Pontiff of the Religion,) "governed the whole body of Christians in the Oriental countries. Liou-siou-yen, counsellor of the palace, and formerly Member of the Council of War, wrote this inscription."

This precious monument, of which Voltaire had the audacity, or rather the bad faith, to dispute the authenticity, speaks also of a person celebrated in China named *Kouo-tze-y*. He was the most illustrious man of the Tang dynasty, either in peace or war; and several times replaced on the throne Emperors, who had been driven from it by foreigners and rebels. He lived to be eighty-four years of age, and died in 781, the same year when this monument was erected. His name has remained popular in China to the present time: he is often chosen as the hero of dramatic pieces, and we have heard his name pronounced with respect in assemblies of Mandarins.

There is every reason to think that this man was a Christian; this is what is said of him on the monument of Si-ngan-fou.

"Kouo-tze-y, the first president of the ministerial court, and king of the city of Fen-yen, was in the beginning generalissimo of the armies of So-fan, that is to say, in the Northern countries. The Emperor Sou-tsoung associated him with himself for his companion in a long march; but although, by singular favour, he was admitted familiarly even into the Emperor's chamber, he was never more in his own eyes than a simple soldier. He was the nails and the teeth of the Empire, the ears and the eyes of the army; he

distributed among them the pay and the presents that he received from the Emperor, and never accumulated any thing in his own house. He kept the ancient churches in repair, or he enlarged them, raised their roofs and their porticoes to a greater height, and embellished them in such a manner that their edifices were like pheasants spreading their wings to fly.

"Besides that, he served in every manner the Christian religion: he was assiduous in the exercise of charity, and lavish in the distribution of alms. Every year he assembled the priests and the Christians of the four Churches ; he entertained them zealously with suitable viands, and continued these liberalities for fifty days in succession. Those who were hungry came to him, and he fed them. He took care of the sick, and restored them to health ; he buried the dead and put them to rest. It has not been heard, up to the present time, that the virtue of any one shone so brightly, even in the Tha-so, those men who devote themselves so religiously to good works."

The whole life of Kouo-tze-y appears to have been admirable, and offers details of the greatest interest. We regret that the limits we are obliged to prescribe to ourselves, do not permit us to give here the biography of this illustrious Chinese Christian of the 8th century ; but we cannot resist quoting the magnificent eulogium that a Chinese historian has passed upon him. "This great man," he says, "died in the eighty-fifth year of his age. He was protected by Heaven on account of his virtues ; he was beloved by men on account of his beautiful qualities ; he was feared by the enemies of the state on account of his valour ; he was respected by the subjects within the Empire on account of his incorruptible integrity, his justice, and mildness ; he was the support, the counsellor, and soul of his sovereigns; he was loaded with riches and honours, during the course of his long life ; he was universally regretted at his death, and he left behind him a numerous posterity, the heirs of his glory and his merits, as well as of his fortune and his name. The whole Empire put on mourning at his death,—and this mourning was the same as that worn by children for the death of those from whom they have received life : it lasted three whole years."

There is no doubt, then, that the Christian religion was flourishing in China in the 8th century, since it contained within its bosom such men as Kouo-tze-y, but it is probable, nevertheless, that the faithful had many contests to sustain with the Bonzes, and also with the Nestorians, who, at this epoch, were scattered in great numbers all over the regions of high Asia.

It is well known that towards the beginning of the 9th century, Timotheus, Patriarch of the Nestorians, sent some monks to preach the Gospel among the Tartars of Hioung-nou who had taken refuge on the borders of the Caspian Sea, and subsequently these monks penetrated into Central Asia, and as far as China. The torch of faith grew pale afterwards, no doubt, even if it were not entirely extinguished, in those distant countries, but it revived in the most brilliant manner in the 13th and 14th centuries, the epoch in which the communications between the East and the West became more frequent on account of the crusades, and of the invasions of the Tartars,— gigantic events, whose effect was to unite and mingle together all the nations of the earth.

The Church did not fail to take advantage of these great political convulsions, to forward her pacific and holy work, the propagation of the faith. From the time of Tchingis-khan and his successors, missionaries were sent to Tartary and China. They carried with them ornaments of the church—altars and relics, "to see," says Joinville, "if they could attract these people to our faith." They celebrated the ceremonies of religion before the Tartar princes, who granted them an asylum in their tents, and permitted them to raise chapels, even within the enclosures of their palaces. Two of these, Plan-Carpin and Rubruk, have left us curious accounts of these travels.

Plan-Carpin was sent, in 1246, to the great Khan of the Tartars by Pope Innocent the Fourth; he crossed the Tanais and the Volga, passed to the north of the Caspian Sea, followed the northern frontiers of the regions that occupy the centre of Asia, and took his course towards the country of the Mongols, where a grandson of Tchingis-khan had just been proclaimed sovereign. About the same time, the monk Rubruk, charged by St. Louis with a mission to the Western Tartars, followed nearly the same route.

At Khara-Khoroum, the capital of the Monguls, he saw, not far from the palace of the sovereign, an edifice upon which was a little cross: "then," says he, "I was at the height of joy, and supposing that there must be some Christians there, I entered, and found an altar magnificently adorned. There were representations of the Saviour, the Holy Virgin, and of John the Baptist, on cloths embroidered with gold, and two angels, of which the body and the vestments were enriched with precious stones. There was a large silver cross, with pearls and other ornaments in the centre, and at the corners; and a lamp with eight jets of light burned before the altar. In the sanctuary was seated an Armenian monk of a swarthy complexion, very thin, wearing nothing but a coarse

tunic, reaching only down to the middle of his leg, and a black mantle fastened with iron clasps."* Rubruk relates, that there were in these countries a great number of Nestorians and Greek Catholics, who celebrated the Christian festivals with perfect freedom. Princes and Emperors even received baptism, and protected the propagators of the faith.

At the beginning of the 14th century, Pope Clement the Fifth † instituted an archbishopric at Pekin, in favour of Jean de Montcorvin, a French missionary, who preached the Gospel in these countries for forty-two years, and when he died left a very flourishing Christian community.

An archbishopric at Pekin, with four suffragans in the neighbouring countries: surely these afford sufficient proof that there were at this period a great number of Christians in China.

These communications, however, were interrupted, and by degrees Cathay and Zipangri ‡, whose wonders so much excited the imaginations of the Western nations, at the time when the curious narratives of the noble Venetian, Marco Polo, made their appearance, were entirely lost sight of by them.

The very existence of these empires began to be doubted; and the accounts of the famous traveller, whose faithfulness and simple sincerity are now fully admitted, were regarded as mere fables.

The discovery of China had to be made over again, and this glory belongs to the Portuguese. These bold navigators having reached the Cape of Good Hope, doubled it, and reached the Indies by a route that no vessel had followed before. In 1517, the Viceroy of Goa despatched to Canton eight vessels under the command of Fernand d'Andrada, who received the title of Ambassador. D'Andrada, who was of a soft and pliant character, managed to gain the friendship of the Viceroy of Canton, and made an advantageous treaty of commerce with him, the commencement of the relations of China with Europe. Subsequently,

* *Tunc gavisus sum multum, supponens quod ibi esset aliquid Christianitatis. Ingressus confidenter, inveni altare paratum vere pulchre. Erat enim in panno aureo brosdate ymago Salvatoris et beate Virginis, et Johannis Baptiste et duorum angelorum, lineamentis corporis et vestimentorum distinctis margaritis, crux magna argentea habens gemmas in angulis et in medio sui, et alia philateria multa, et lucerna cum oleo ardens ante altare, habens octo lumina; et sedebat ibi unus monachus Armenus nigellus, macilentus, indutus tunica asperimma usque medias tibias, habens desuper pallium nigrum, de seta furratum, vario ligatus ferro sub cilicio.*— (Recueil de Voyages et de Mémoires publié par la Société de Géographie, tom. iv. p. 301.)

† The tomb of this celebrated Pope is to be seen in the cathedral of Avignon.

‡ China and Japan.

the Portuguese rendered the Chinese a signal service by capturing a famous pirate, who had long ravaged their coasts; and in gratitude for this service the Emperor permitted the Portuguese to establish themselves on a peninsula formed by some sterile rocks. On this spot arose the city of Macao, long the sole mart of the commerce of Europeans with the Celestial Empire. At present Macao is a mere remembrance; the English establishment at Hong-Kong has given it the mortal blow, and nothing is left of its former prosperity but fine houses without tenants; in a few years more, perhaps, the European ships, as they sail past this once proud and wealthy Portuguese colony, will see only a naked rock to which the Chinese fisherman will come to dry his black nets. Missionaries, however, will still like to visit these ruins, for the name of Macao will be always celebrated in the history of the propagation of the faith; there, during many centuries, were formed, as in a cenacle, the apostles who afterwards went to carry the glad tidings of the Gospel to China, Japan, Tartary, the Corea, Cochin China, and Tonquin.

While the Portuguese were labouring to develop the importance of their colony of Macao, St. Francis de Xavier was preaching at Japan, which the Chinese merchants of Ning-po annually visited in their great trading junks.

It was probably from them that he learned those particulars concerning China, which he wrote to Europe towards the end of his life. Having formed the project of carrying the faith into this vast empire, he embarked for it, but he had not yet set foot on the land he had so long sighed after, when he was overtaken by death on a little island near the Chinese coast.

Other apostolic men, however, took up his idea, and heirs of his zeal for the glory of God, threw themselves into the path he had pointed out. The first, and most celebrated, was Father Matthew Ricci, who entered China towards the end of the 16th century.

Religious ideas do not, it must be owned, strike very deep root in this country, and the seeds of the Christian faith, cast into it in the earlier ages, appear to have entirely perished. With the exception of the above-mentioned inscription at Si-ngan, no trace of the passage of former missionaries, or of their preaching, was then to be found. Not even in the traditions of the country was preserved the slightest trace of the religion of Jesus Christ. A melancholy trait is it in the character of this people, that Christian truth does but glide over its surface!

All was now to begin again; but Father Ricci possessed all the

necessary qualifications for this great and difficult enterprise. "A zeal courageous and indefatigable, but wise, patient, circumspect, — slow, that it might be more efficacious, and timid in order to dare the more; such should have been the character of him, whom God had destined to be the Apostle of a nation, refined, suspicious, and naturally hostile to all that does not arise within itself. A character so truly magnanimous was needed to begin over again a work so often destroyed, to know how to profit by the smallest resources; his superior genius, and his rare and profound knowledge, were needed to render him respected by people accustomed to respect nothing but themselves, and to teach a new law to those who had not hitherto supposed that any one could teach them anything; and his modesty and humility were also required, to soften to this proud people, the yoke of a superiority of mind which is only voluntarily submitted to, when it is not perceived. Most of all was required the great virtue, and the continual union with God, that distinguishes this Apostolic man, to render supportable to himself by the inward grace of the spirit, the toils of so painful a life as that which he led in China, compared with which one may consider that the longest martyrdom would have spared him many sufferings." *

After more than twenty years of labour and patience, Father Ricci had reaped only cruel persecutions and sterile applause; but after he had been received favourably at court, the conversions became numerous, and Catholic churches arose in many places. Father Ricci died in 1610, at the age of fifty-eight; and he had the consolation to leave his mission at last in a flourishing state, as well as missionaries animated with his own zeal, who like him, calling the arts and sciences to the aid of their ministry, continued to rouse the curiosity of the Chinese in order to dispose them favourably towards the object they had in view.

The most illustrious among them were the Fathers Adam Schal and Verbiest. It is to the latter that the French are indebted for their entrance into China; it was he who sent for them to Pekin, and induced the Emperor to receive them and treat them with distinction.

In 1684, an idea of sending missionaries to China began to be entertained in France for the first time. The Royal Academy of Sciences was then working, by order of the king, at the reform of their geography. They had sent members of their illustrious body into all the French ports of the ocean and the Mediterranean,

* Preface to the *Lettres édifiantes*, t. iii. p. 5.

as well as into England, Denmark, Africa, and America, to make the necessary observations. But they were much more perplexed when it came to sending persons to India and China. Academicians, it was thought, would run the risk of not being well received in those countries — and of giving offence. The Royal Academy began, therefore, to think of the Jesuits. Colbert had an interview on the subject with Father de Fontaney and M. Gassini. The death of the great Colbert frustrated the project for some time; but it was resumed afterwards, by his successor M. le Marquis de Louvois. Six missionaries — the Fathers de Fontaney, Tachard, Gerbillon, le Comte, de Visdelou, and Bouvet — embarked at Brest, on the 3rd of March, 1685, and landed at Ning-po on the 23rd of July, 1687. Thence they repaired to Pekin, where they had soon gained the esteem and admiration of all classes of the people by their virtue, their learning, and their apostolic zeal. They got so completely into the good graces of the Emperor, that he gave them a house even within the limits of the Yellow City, and quite near to his own palace, in order to be able to converse with them more easily. A short time afterwards he also assigned to them a large space for the construction of a church; he contributed with much liberality towards the expenses of the erection, and in order to afford the French missionaries a striking proof of his devotion, he chose himself to compose the Chinese inscription in honour of the true God, that was to be placed on the front of it.

The Emperor Khang-hi declared himself openly as the protector of the new religion; influenced by his example, the princes and great dignitaries showed themselves favourable to it, and the number of neophytes increased considerably not only in the capital, but also throughout the extent of the Empire. The missionaries who were scattered about the provinces, profiting by the good disposition of the head of the State, redoubled their ardour in preaching of the Gospel, and in a short time there arose in every quarter, churches, chapels, oratories, and flourishing Christian communities. The Chinese no longer feared that by receiving baptism they should incur disgrace and the persecutions of the Mandarins. The Christians held up their heads and showed themselves proud of their religion; perhaps they did so a little too much, for it is common with men who are pusillanimous and cowardly in times of trial, to become arrogant in a period of prosperity. It was to be feared, however, that this success, based in some measure on the Imperial favour, would not be of very long duration: and thus it proved.

The unfortunate disputes of the missionaries on the subject of

the rites practised in honour of Confucius and of ancestors, tended greatly to cool the friendship of the Emperor Khang-hi, and to excite his anger. At his death a violent reaction took place; his successor Young-tching let loose against the Christians the hatred and jealousy that had been held in check during the preceding reign. The celebrated Father Gaubil* arrived in China during this melancholy period, and he wrote thus concerning it (in 1722) to the Archbishop of Toulouse, Monsieur de Normond:—

"I have only been a few months in China, and I was much grieved when I came, to find a mission which only a short time ago held out such encouraging hopes, reduced to so melancholy a condition. The churches are in ruins, the Christians dispersed, the missionaries exiled and confined in Canton—the first port in China, without being permitted to advance further into the Empire; the religion itself is on the point of being proscribed. This, my lord, is the mournful sight that met my eyes at my entrance into a country supposed to be so favourably disposed for receiving the Gospel." The mournful predictions of Father Gaubil were not long in being realised. Two years afterwards Father de Mailla wrote to France, to one of his colleagues:—"How can we write to you in the overwhelming position in which we find ourselves, and how can we make known to you the particulars of the melancholy scenes that are passing before our eyes? What we have been dreading for so many years—what we had so often predicted—has at last come to pass. Our holy religion is entirely proscribed in China; all the missionaries, with the exception of those who were at Pekin†, have been driven from the Empire; the churches are demolished or put to profane uses; edicts have been issued, in which the severest penalties are threatened to those who shall embrace the Christian faith, or who having done so shall fail to renounce it. Such is the deplorable state to which a mission is reduced, that for 200 years has cost us so much labour and suffering."

Thus the prosperity that had sprung up under the protection of one Emperor, disappeared at the first word of persecution from his successor. The Church of China had doubtless grand and beautiful examples of constancy in the faith to record in its annals; but numerous and lamentable defections proved also that Christianity had not struck deeper root in it than it had done in

* Father Gaubil, born at Gaillac (Tarn), was the most illustrious missionary of the period in China.

† The missionaries permitted to remain at Pekin were employed in the Mathematical Office, under the title of artists and learned men.

past ages, and that the Chinese, so tenacious and immovable in their attachment to ancient custom, had little energy and steadiness in the cause of religion.

To Young-tching, a prince, as we have seen, hostile to Christianity, succeeded Kien-long, whose long and brilliant reign seemed to have revived that of Khangi. The missionaries recovered their credit at Court, and the work of the propagation of the Gospel was resumed, but amidst perpetual vicissitudes; sometimes tolerated, now and then openly protected, but more often fiercely persecuted, especially in the provinces. The number of Christians, however, was gradually increasing, when the suppression of the religious orders and the political commotions of Europe not only arrested the progress of the missions, but gave cause to fear that the flame of religion would be once more extinguished in the remote East. The old missionaries were removed by death, there were no new ones to take their places, and the Christians, left to themselves, were betraying the greatest weakness, when another persecution broke out under Kia-king, the successor of Kien-long on the Imperial Throne. During this unfortunate period the Christian communities, in many cases, completely disappeared.

We have visited, in the provinces, a great number of towns that formerly possessed Christian churches, where we could not find a single Christian. In the country some poor families still cling to the faith, as the Mandarins have found nothing among them to tempt their cupidity, or because, having no inheritance in this world, they the more felt the necessity of persevering in their efforts to gain one in the world to come.

In vain, however, has China disappointed over and over again the hopes of the Church; the Church is never discouraged. The moment circumstances appeared in the slightest degree more favourable, Evangelical labourers presented themselves, no less zealous and devoted than their predecessors. They crossed the ocean to seek, in that land ravaged by so many tempests, the few germs of faith that had not perished; they cherished them with care, they watered them with their tears, and scattered new seeds as they passed along in their apostolic journeys. Their first care was to collect the dispersed Christians, to induce them to resume the practice of their duty, and to bring back to God and to the faith the families that had had the weakness to succumb during the persecution. For thirty years past the number of missions has been continually on the increase, the greater part of the ancient communities have been re-organised, and the spark that

had been nearly extinct revived again in their bosoms. Little by little also new ones have been formed to replace those that disappeared in the storm. The great and beautiful association for the propagation of the faith, with the idea of which God inspired a poor woman of Lyons, has made considerable progress; the Holy See has erected the eighteen provinces of China into so many Vicariates Apostolic, in which priests of foreign missions, Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Lazaristes labour without ceasing for the extension of the kingdom of Heaven.

Every vicariate possesses, besides a great number of schools for the education of both boys and girls, and a seminary where young Chinese are brought up to the ecclesiastical profession; in various parts of the country also pious associations have been formed with the purpose of bestowing baptism on dying children, or collecting those who have been abandoned; and nurseries and asylums have been instituted on the model of those that have prospered so well in France.

At the present time the propagation of the Gospel is nevertheless not going on so well as before. The missionaries are no longer at Court under the protection of the Emperor and of men of high rank, going and coming with the ceremonial of Mandarins, and appearing in the eyes of the people in the imposing position of a power recognised by the State. They are, on the contrary, proscribed throughout the length and breadth of the Empire; they have to creep into it by stealth, with all kinds of precautions, and to conceal their abodes to elude the vigilance of the magistrates. They even have to avoid showing themselves to the infidels for fear of exciting the suspicions of the authorities, and compromising the safety of the Christians and the future prospects of the missions. It may easily be supposed that, thus fettered, it is impossible for the missionary to act directly upon the population and afford his zeal free play. Not only is he prohibited from proclaiming in public the word of God, but it would not often be safe for him so much as to mention the subject of religion in private with an infidel of whom he was not sure. He must circumscribe his zeal strictly within the limits of his ministry. To go from one community to another, to instruct and exhort the neophytes, administer the sacraments, celebrate in secret the festivals of the holy Church, visit the schools and afford what encouragement he can to both masters and pupils, — this is the circle within which he is compelled to confine himself. In all the communities there are certain heads or elders designated as *Catechists*, who are chosen among the most steady, best instructed,

and influential Christians of the locality, and who are charged to instruct the ignorant, and to catechise and preside over the prayers in the absence of the missionary. It is they who can act most directly on the infidels, instruct them in the truths of religion, and exhort them to renounce the superstitions of Buddhism. But, unfortunately, their zeal for the conversion of their brethren is seldom very ardent, and they need to be constantly kept up to the mark by all kinds of encouragements.

Such is the method generally followed in China for the propagation of the faith, and it may easily be conceived that it leaves much to be desired. Here and there a few conversions take place, and, on the whole, the number of Christians does certainly increase, — but so slowly, and with so many hindrances, that one scarcely knows what to think of the future prospects of religion in these countries. On the whole, there may be perhaps at present 800,000 Christians in the Chinese Empire; but what is that out of 300,000,000 of inhabitants? Such an amount of success is not, it must be owned, very encouraging when it is remembered that it is the result of many centuries of preaching, and of the efforts of countless missionaries.

It is natural that our readers should ask what may be considered the cause of this deplorable sterility. First, then, it is indisputable that, as the Government is opposed to Christianity, the timid and pusillanimous Chinese will have no great inclination to profess it, to brave the hostility of the Mandarins, and defying persecution, to exclaim with pious daring, "It is better to disoley man than God!" They will excuse themselves by referring to the prohibition of the Emperor. But it may be asked, "would it not be possible to induce the Emperor to grant religious liberty to his subjects?" No, we think not. Not that the Chinese Government is in its own nature intolerant and persecuting — not the least in the world; in matters of religion it is completely indifferent. It does indeed admit for the public functionaries a kind of official worship, consisting in merely external ceremonies, but it is itself profoundly sceptical, leaving the people to adopt what ideas they please concerning religion, and even from time to time recommending them to have none at all. The Emperor Tao-kouang, some time before his accession to the throne, addressed to the people a proclamation, in which he passed in review all the religions known in the Empire—Christianity included—and came at last to the conclusion that they were all false, and that one would do well to despise them altogether.

A Chinese may therefore please his fancy, and become a disciple

of Buddha, of Confucius, of Lao-tze, or of Mahomet, without the tribunals troubling themselves at all about it; the Government only proscribes and pursues with severity certain sects, which are in fact only secret societies, organised for the overthrow of the reigning dynasty. Unfortunately it has placed Christianity in this category, and it is very difficult to correct this error, and introduce more just ideas. Seeing that Christianity has been brought into China and propagated by Europeans, the Government has persuaded itself that they have done this merely with a view to obtain partizans, in order to be able some time or other to seize on the Empire with more facility. The greater the zeal of the Europeans, the greater is the fear and suspicion of the Government. The submission and attachment, too, which the neophytes manifest towards these missionaries, tend to strengthen these chimerical terrors. We say chimerical, since assuredly we know very well that missionaries do not leave their country, and go to the end of the world to wear out their lives, in the hope of overthrowing a Mantchoo dynasty. But the Government of Pekin does not see this; being profoundly sceptical itself, it has no conception of religious feeling, and cannot at all comprehend why people should come so far, and endure so many sufferings and privations, for no other purpose than to teach gratuitously to unknown persons, forms of prayer, and the means of saving their souls. Such a proceeding would appear to them so excessively absurd, so great a folly and extravagance, that no one, not even a European, could be guilty of it. The Chinese, therefore, are thoroughly convinced that, under pretence of religion, we are really manœuvring for the invasion of the Empire, and the overthrow of the dynasty; and it must be owned, that they have under their eyes certain facts that have no tendency to convince them of their mistake. Careful as they are to surround themselves with jealous barriers, and not to suffer an indiscreet glance to be cast on their own doings, they like very well to know what is going on among their neighbours. And what do they see all around them? Europeans, masters everywhere where they have introduced themselves, and the natives subjected to a domination little enough conformable to the precepts of the Gospel. The Spaniards in the Philippine Islands, the Dutch in Java and Sumatra, the Portuguese at their own doors, and the English everywhere! The French alone they do not see, but they are perhaps malicious enough to suppose that we are only seeking for an opportunity to instal ourselves somewhere.

This is no mere supposition of ours; the Chinese really have

these notions, and they do not date from yesterday. In 1724, when the Emperor Young-tching proscribed the Christian religion, three of the principal Jesuits who were at Court addressed a petition to him, supplicating him to revoke his decision, and continue to the Christians the protection they had enjoyed under the previous reign. This is what is said on the subject in a letter of Father Mailla, dated from Pekin:—

"The Emperor sent for the three fathers to come to him,—a favour we by no means expected. As soon as they had been introduced to his presence he made them a speech a quarter of an hour long, which he seemed to have studied, for he repeated very fluently all that could justify his conduct with respect to us, and replied to the arguments alleged in the petition. This is the substance of what he said:—'The late Emperor my father, after having instructed me for forty years, chose me in preference to my brothers to succeed him on the throne. It is my great endeavour to imitate him, and not to depart in anything from his manner of governing. Certain Europeans* in the province of Fo-kien have been endeavouring to defy our laws, and trouble our people. The great men of our province have applied to me, and I must repress this disorder. It is the business of the government with which I am charged, and I neither can nor ought to act now, as I did when I was a private prince.

"You say that your law is not a false law, and I believe it. If I thought it were, what should hinder me from destroying your churches and driving you from the Empire? False laws are those which under pretext of virtue fan the spirit of revolt,—as the law of Pe-lien-kiao† does. But what would you say if I were to send a troop of Bonzes and Lamas into your country to preach their law in it? How would you receive them?

"Le-ma-teou (the Chinese name for Father Ricci) came to China—in the first year of Ouan-ly. I will not speak of what the Chinese did at that time; that is not my business; but you were then in small numbers, a mere nothing. You had not your people and your churches in every province. It was only in my father's reign you began to build churches and to spread about your law everywhere with such rapidity; we observed it, though we did not dare say anything; but if you found means to deceive my father, you need not hope to deceive me in the same way.

"You wish to make the Chinese Christians, and this is what

* Spanish Dominicans, settled in the province of Fo-kien.

† The sect of the "White Lily."

your law demands, I know very well. But what in that case would become of us? The subjects of your kings! The Christians whom you make, recognise no authority but you; in times of trouble they would listen to no other voice. I know well enough that there is nothing to fear at present; but when your ships shall be coming by thousands and tens of thousands; then, indeed, we may have some disturbances."

From all that we have been able to observe during our long residence in China, it is certain that all Christians are regarded as the creatures of European governments. This idea has penetrated so deeply into the Chinese mind, that they sometimes express it with strange simplicity.

The Christian religion is designated in China as Tien-tchou-kiao, that is to say, the religion of the Lord of Heaven; the idea of God being expressed by the word Tien-tchou. One day we were speaking of religion with a really superior sort of Mandarin, a very intelligent fellow. He asked us who was that Tien-tchou, whom the Christians adore and invoke, and who had promised to render them rich and happy in such an extraordinary manner. "Why," said we, "do you, a learned man of the first class, a well-instructed man, and one who has read the books of our religion, do you ask this? Do you not know who is the Tien-tchou of the Christians?"

"Ah, you are right," said he, putting his hand to his forehead, as if to recall a half-vanishing recollection; "you are right, I ought to know; but I really had forgotten all about this Tien-tchou."

"Well, you know now, who is he then?"

"Oh to be sure, everybody knows,—he is the Emperor of the French!"

All Mandarins perhaps are not so bad as this one, but the conviction is pretty general among them that the propagation of Christianity is a political movement; and it would be extremely difficult to set them right, and induce the Government to grant the liberty which is so necessary for a favourable reception of the Gospel.

The frequent persecutions of all kinds, that the Government exerts against the Christians, form of course one great and serious obstacle to the conversion of the Chinese; but it is not the greatest, for after all there was a time when religion was not exposed to these attacks from the authorities. Under the reign of the Emperor Khang-hi, the missionaries were honoured and caressed by the Court; the Emperor himself wrote in favour of Christianity; he had churches built at his expense, and the preachers, provided

with an Imperial licence, might traverse the Empire freely from one end to the other, and exhort every one to be baptized. No Christian had anything to fear; on the contrary, they were sure to find, in case of need, aid and protection from the missionaries. No one dared to do them the least injury or the slightest wrong; the Mandarins were obliged to treat them with kindness and consideration; but notwithstanding these advantages, so greatly appreciated by the Chinese, the conversions were by no means as rapid, numerous, and steadily progressive, as they were in Europe, when the Gospel was first preached there. With some few precious exceptions, it was met everywhere with coldness and indifference.

It is not necessary, however, to go back so far, in order to know what the Chinese character is, even when there is nothing to be feared from the Mandarins. In the five ports open to Europeans, religious liberty really does exist, and it is protected by the presence of consuls and ships of war. Yet the number of Christians does not increase more rapidly than in the interior of the Empire. In Macao, Hong Kong, Manilla, Sincapore, Pinang, Batavia, though they are under the dominion of Europeans, the great mass of the population consists of Chinese, who for the most part are permanently settled in these cities, and hold in their hands the great interests of agriculture, commerce, and industry. It is certainly not the fear of persecution from the European authorities that hinders them from embracing Christianity. Yet the conversions are not more numerous than elsewhere.

At Manilla, which is a Spanish colony, the number of Chinese Christians is considerable; but that may probably be ascribed to the effect of a law passed by the Spanish Government, which forbids a Chinese to marry a *Tagale** woman, until he has become a Christian. When the Chinese wish to marry, therefore, they receive baptism, just as they would go through any other ceremony that was required. But if, even after the lapse of many years, the fancy takes them to return to their own country, they leave the wife and the religion behind, and go back as they came, perfect sceptics, and not troubling themselves at all about things spiritual and eternal. It is this radical, profound indifference to all religion—an indifference that is scarcely conceivable by any who have not witnessed it—which is in our opinion the real, grand obstacle that has so long opposed the progress of Christianity in China. The Chinese is so completely absorbed in temporal

* The Tagales are the aborigines of the Philippine Islands.

interests, in the things that fall under his senses, that his whole life is only materialism put in action.

Lucre is the sole object on which his eyes are constantly fixed. A burning thirst to realise some profit, great or small, absorbs all his faculties — the whole energy of his being. He never pursues anything with ardour but riches and material enjoyments. God — the soul — a future life — he believes in none of them, or, rather, he never thinks about them at all. If he ever takes up a moral or religious book, it is only by way of amusement — to pass the time away. It is a less serious occupation than smoking a pipe or drinking a cup of tea. If you speak to him of the foundations of faith, of the principles of Christianity, of the importance of salvation, the certainty of a life beyond the grave — all these truths, which so powerfully impress a mind susceptible of religious feeling, he listens to with pleasure, for it amuses him and piques his curiosity. He admits everything, approves of all you say, does not find the least difficulty, or make the smallest objection. In his opinion, all this is "true, fine, grand," and he puts himself into an oratorical attitude, and makes a beautiful speech against idolatry, and in favour of Christianity. He deplores the blindness of men who attach themselves to the perishable goods of this world; perhaps he will even give utterance to some fine sentences on the happiness of knowing the true God; of serving him, and of meriting by this means the reward of eternal life. To listen to him, you would think him just ready to become a Christian, in fact, that he was such already; yet he has not advanced a single step. It must not, however, be supposed that his speeches are wholly insincere; he does really — after a fashion — believe what he says; at all events, he has certainly no conviction to the contrary; he merely never thinks of religion as a serious matter at all. He likes very well to talk about it; but it is as of a thing not made for him — that he personally has nothing to do with. The Chinese carry this indifference so far, — religious sensibility is so entirely withered or dead within them, — that they care not a straw whether a doctrine be true or false, good or bad. Religion is to them simply a fashion, which those may follow who have a taste for it.

In one of the principal towns of China, we were for some time in communication with a lettered Chinese, who appeared extremely well disposed to embrace Christianity. We had several conferences together, and we studied carefully the most important and difficult points of doctrine, and finally, by way of complement to our oral instruction, we read some of the best books. Our dear catechu-

men admitted, without any exception, everything we advanced; the only difficulty was, he said, the learning by heart the prayers, that every good Christian ought to know, in order to say them morning and evening, As he seemed nevertheless to desire putting off to some indefinite period the moment in which he should declare himself a Christian, every time he came to see us we urged him to do so, and made the most earnest representation of the duty of following the truth, now that he knew where it lay. "By and by," said he; "all in good time. One should never be precipitate." One day, however, he spoke out a little more. "Come," said he, "let us speak to-day only words conformable to reason. It is not good to be too enthusiastic. No doubt the Christian religion is beautiful and sublime; its doctrine explains, with method and clearness, all that it is necessary for man to know. Whoever has any sense must see that, and will adopt it in his heart in all sincerity; but, after all, one must not think too much of these things, and increase the cares of life. Now, just consider—we have a body; how many cares it demands! It must be clothed, fed, and sheltered from the injuries of the weather; its infirmities are great, and its maladies numerous. It is agreed on all hands, that health is our most precious good. This body that we see, that we touch, must be taken care of every day, and every moment of the day. Now is not this enough without troubling ourselves about a soul that we never do see? The life of man is short and full of misery; it is made up of a succession of important concerns, that follow one another without interruption. Our hearts and our minds are scarcely sufficient for the solicitudes of the present life—is it wise then to torment oneself about the future one?"

"Doctor," we replied, "you said when you began, that our discourse to-day should be a reasonable one; but take care, for it often happens, that we think we are listening to the voice of reason, when in fact only prejudice and habit are speaking. Our bodies are full of infirmities, you say; that is true, for they are perishable, and it is for that very reason we should do better to concern ourselves about our souls, which are immortal, and which certainly exist, though we cannot see them. Our present life, you say, is a tissue of paltry cares. Undoubtedly it is—and that is precisely why it is reasonable to think of that future life which will have no end. What would you think of a traveller who, on finding himself at a dilapidated inn, open to all the winds and deficient in the most absolute necessaries, should spend all his time, in trying how he could make himself most comfortable in it, without ever thinking of preparing for his departure, and his

return into the bosom of his family? Would this traveller be acting in a wise and reasonable manner?"

"No! no!" replied the doctor; "one must not travel in that way; but man, nevertheless, ought to confine himself within proper limits. How can he provide for two lives at the same time? If the traveller ought not regularly to take up his abode at an inn, neither ought he to travel on two roads at the same time. When one wishes to cross a river, one must not have two boats, and set a foot in each; one would run the risk of tumbling into the water, and drowning oneself." This was all we could get out of the doctor, who nevertheless was really a worthy fellow enough, but a most thorough *Chinese*. We shall, in the sequel, often have occasion to refer to this indifferentism, the inveterate and chronic malady of the Empire of China.

The reader may perhaps, by this time, have forgotten that we were setting out from the Tching-tou-fou, and that we received at the gate, a letter from Monseigneur the Vicar Apostolic of the province of Sse-tchouen. It was this letter that occasioned us to cast a glance over the first introduction, the numerous vicissitudes and the present state of Christianity in China.

During the first hour of our march, we noticed all along the road the hurry and activity that is always seen more or less in the neighbourhood of great towns, but more especially in China, where traffic keeps every one perpetually in motion. Horsemen, pedestrians, porters, thronged the road, and raised clouds of dust, that soon completely enveloped us and our palanquins, and threatened to suffocate us. By degrees, as we advanced, all these busy travellers had to slacken their pace, and get out of the way, and, in fact, to stop, in order to allow us to pass. The horsemen, alighted, and those who wore large straw hats had to take them off. Those who did not hasten to show these marks of respect to the illustrious "Devils of the West," were graciously invited to do so, by a shower of thumps with the rattan, bestowed by way of reminder by two of our attendants, who acquitted themselves *con amore* of so pleasant a duty. When people spared them the trouble, by being voluntarily mindful of "the rites," they walked off, looking rather sulky, and eyeing with a disappointed look their idle bamboos.

It is usual in China for the people to manifest their respect for magistrates, when they pass them in the streets, or on the roads, with their insignia of office. No one is allowed to remain seated; those who are in palanquins have to stop, the horsemen to alight, the wearers of broad-brimmed straw hats to uncover, everybody

has to keep silence and to maintain a respectful and filial attitude in presence of him whom they call their "Father and Mother;" and who passes proudly before them, casting at them from his palanquin an oblique and disdainful glance. Those who, from negligence or forgetfulness, fail to comply with this ceremonial, are immediately and roughly recalled to their duty, by some ill-looking, uncombed satellites, with sallow faces and fierce eyes, who are down upon them in a moment with their whips and rattans, and endeavour in the most energetic manner to inculcate on them a lesson of filial piety. In general, the people submit with a very good grace to these demands, to which they are bent and fashioned by long habit, and the legitimacy of which no one dreams of contesting. But it does nevertheless happen from time to time, that the Chinese do not take these lessons with quite so much docility, and then quarrels and even regular battles take place, in which everybody takes part, the merely curious and disinterested parties generally with the citizens against the agents of authority. The satellites then become humbled and trembling; they are pushed about, hustled, beaten and pulled by their tails, and the Mandarin generally has at last to get out of his palanquin to quell the riot. If he is loved and esteemed by the people, this is easy enough; they listen to his exhortations, and the seditious revolt dies away; but if it happens that they have any complaints against him, they profit by this fortunate occurrence to give him a lesson in his turn. They crowd round him, and load him with sarcasm and abuse, the illusion of his omnipotence speedily vanishes; and the people, usually so respectful and submissive, are carried by passion to the most violent excesses.

The viceroy Pao-hing, in framing the regulations to be observed during our journey, had ordered that all along the road the same honours should be paid to us as to functionaries of the highest rank; and we had scarcely begun our journey, before we perceived that very energetic measures were employed in the execution of the prescribed orders. It was far from agreeable to us to travel in this way. We fairly blushed with shame at assuming thus the appearance of petty tyrants, and felt a pang of remorse, whenever our attendants gave way to their brutality against travellers who were not quite quick enough in demonstrating their respect. Yet notwithstanding our repugnance, it was necessary to reconcile ourselves to these rather savage honours, which the Celestial Empire has but seldom lavished on foreigners. All that we could do was to beg the civil Mandarin to desire our people to be as indulgent as possible to those who might fail in the observance of

the "Rites." He did so; but our recommendation had very little effect; indeed it rather seemed to operate the contrary way, for our satellites, seeing that we had taken notice of their zeal in our honour, became even more zealous than before.

After a three hours' march we reached a Koung-kouan, or communal palace, where we were to rest for a little while and take some refreshments. The guardians of the palace were waiting for us in their state dresses at the door, the top of which had been hung with draperies of red silk; and at the moment of our entrance, they set fire to a paquet of fireworks that had been fastened to the end of a long bamboo; and we marched into the hall of reception to the sound of this Chinese musquetry, and in the midst of the profoundest salutations, which we endeavoured to return with interest. Upon a brilliantly varnished table was placed a magnificent collation of pastry and fruit, amidst which arose conspicuously an enormous water melon, the thick black skin of which had been carved in fanciful designs by a Chinese engraver. By the side of the table was a *guéridon*, supporting an antique porcelain jar full of lemonade.

Before we sat down to table, one of the guardians of the place brought us a large copper tub filled with boiling water, into which he plunged some small napkins, and then, wringing them out, he presented one to each of us. Linen towels are made use of in this way, hot and smoking, to wipe the hands and face; and the custom of offering them to you after meals and on journeys is universal in China.

At the beginning of our residence in the country we had some difficulty in conforming to this practice. When we went to visit our Christian converts, and immediately on our arrival, they always hastened to present us with a piece of wet linen, whence issued a boiling vapour; and we should have been very glad to dispense with the ceremony. But by degrees we got accustomed to it, and at last really liked it.

The heat and the dust had annoyed us so much, that we did not fail to do honour to the Chinese fruits, and especially to the lemonade, which was deliciously cool. We were rather surprised to find that it had been prepared with ice, for this is by no means customary amongst the Chinese, who, when they are parched with thirst, can think of nothing more refreshing than swallowing a cup of boiling tea. As we expressed our astonishment at being served with a beverage so conformable to our tastes and the customs of our country, the guardians of the palace informed us that the viceroy had sent all along the road, to the places where

we were to stop, a set of orders, which prescribed, even to the minutest details, the manner in which we were to be entertained. We asked to see these orders, and there truly we read, that the viceroy commanded all the guardians of communal palaces to provide us with juicy fruits, melons, and iced water, flavoured with lemon and sugar, because "such are the customs of the people who come from the western seas." It would certainly not have been easy to find any one more polite and gracious than this Viceroy of Sse-tchouen. When he was questioning us concerning our habits of life in our own country, we did not imagine it was with the view of rendering our passage through China more agreeable to us. In general, we have met with much more devotion of character amongst the Mantchoos than the Chinese, — always more generosity, and less treachery; and now when the Mantchoo Tartars are about to be driven from China, — when they are attacked so violently in all the writings that speak of the Chinese insurrection, we can do no less than bear this sincere and just testimony to their merits.

We resumed our march after a short halt, and arrived a little before night at Kien-tcheou, a town of the second order. In this our first day's journey, we already had occasion to be angry with our conductor, the Mandarin Ting; and we took good care not to let him escape. We had remarked as we came along that our palanquins were not the same that had been shown to us before our departure, which were perfectly convenient. Master Ting had indeed received the money to purchase these, but he had not been able to resist the temptation of keeping the half of it for himself, and had accordingly got two old, narrow, broken-down palanquins varnished, and made to look like new. These were so narrow and inconvenient, that we had had an extremely uneasy journey. But it was not enough for Master Ting thus to speculate on our palanquins; he wished to turn an honest penny also on our bearers. It had been arranged that we were to have four a-piece; but this ingenious speculator had managed to make us do with three; two before, and one behind, so that he pocketed the wages of the fourth.

We were not surprised at this, for we knew that a Chinese can scarcely ever keep the straight path of himself, but has to be forcibly brought back to it. We did not, however, expect to have to begin the very first day, and it did not seem a good augury.

In the evening, when we were taking tea together, we told our conductor that we had been arranging our plans for the next day. "Oh, I understand," said he, with the satisfied air of a man who

considers himself very sagacious; "you don't like the heat, and you would rather set off at an earlier hour in order to enjoy the freshness of the morning; that's it, is it not?"

"Not at all! you are to set out alone, and to go back to Tching-tou-fou."

"Have you, perhaps, forgotten something?"

"No! we have forgotten nothing; but you will go back, as we said, to Tching-tou-fou; you will go to the Viceroy, and tell him that we will have nothing more to do with you."

We said this in so serious a manner, that Master Ting could not possibly imagine there was any joke meant. He started up, and stared at us open-mouthed with an expression of astonishment; and we went on.

"We will have nothing more to do with you; and you will beg the Viceroy to send us another conductor. If the Viceroy should ask why we will have nothing more to do with you, you can tell him, if you please, that it is because you have been cheating us in making us travel in two bad palanquins, and giving us only three bearers each, instead of four."

"That is true! that is true!" cried Master Ting, whose animal spirits had now got into circulation again; "I noticed as we went along that your palanquins were not at all fit for persons of your quality: what you want are those fine handsome palanquins with four bearers; who could doubt that? I saw this morning that there was some confusion in Pao-ngan's house; and things have not been managed as they ought to have been. The Hidden Treasure is a man who loves lucre, as everybody knows; but who could suppose he would carry his avarice so far as not to provide you with suitable palanquins? One must have little regard for one's honour and reputation, to do such a thing as that. However, *we* are rather different sort of people; we will endeavour to make amends for the evil doings of Hidden Treasure, and give you good palanquins instead of those bad ones." This speech was completely Chinese,—that is to say, a lie from one end to the other; but it would have been taking trouble to little purpose to endeavour to refute it. "My Lord Ting," said we, "we know very well what to think on the subject of this fraud; but it does not so much matter to us to know who has pocketed the money for our palanquins, as to know whether we shall have any others. That is the question."

"Yes, certainly, you shall. How can personages like you travel in this manner."

"When shall we have them?"

"Directly — to-morrow."

"Mind what you say. Do not promise more than you can perform."

"To-morrow; certainly not later. We shall come to a considerable place, where the traveller can find everything he desires."

"Since that is the case, let us set off together."

At dawn on the following morning, it was announced to us that everything was ready for our departure. We entered our narrow travelling prisons, and, after a very circuitous course through the streets of the town, the procession reached a great gate, on the banks of the famous Yang-tze-kiang (the "river which is the Son of the Sea"), and which the Europeans call the Blue River. Master Ting approached us now, and said, in the most gracious manner in the world, that since the way by land was long, mountainous, toilsome, and dangerous, from passing by many precipices, he had taken the liberty to hire a boat, in order to render that part of our journey more agreeable and rapid. We had been journeying so long on *terra firma*, that a little trip by water promised to be uncommonly pleasant. The pure calm sky foretold apparently a delightful day, and we already enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure of feeling ourselves borne along by the majestic current of the finest river in the world; whilst we contemplated at leisure the splendour and magnificence of its shores. We immediately, therefore, ascended the deck of the junk, and our palanquins were brought on board after us.

Those who have not tolerably a good stock of patience, or who do not desire an opportunity of acquiring it, should certainly not think of travelling to the Celestial Empire to enjoy the pleasure of a voyage in a junk. They might run the risk of going mad before they weighed anchor.

Scarcely had our procession reached the place of embarkation, than everybody hastened to get on board, and to instal himself there according to his own peculiar notions of comfort.

It has always seemed to us, that the nature of a Chinese, body and soul, had an astonishing resemblance to that of India-rubber. The suppleness of their minds can only be compared to the elasticity of their corporeal frames; and it is worth seeing how, when they have found a snug corner, be it ever so small, they will manage to stuff themselves in, and curl themselves round, and make a perfect nest of it; and when they have once taken up such a position, they are settled in it for the day.

We were no sooner on board, than our numerous travelling companions all contrived to get themselves housed. The palan-

quin bearers seemed to us to have taken up a position one upon the other in the kitchen, to which air and daylight could only enter by a very small aperture. But these people really appear to regard air and light as mere superfluities. No sooner, too, had they crouched down in this hole, than they set to work eagerly to play at cards.

The soldiers, our servants, and those of the Mandarins had, in the meanwhile, stowed themselves away between decks in all sorts of impossible and unimaginable postures, and were busy regaling themselves with tea, tobacco, and noisy gossip. Our two conductors, Ting and the military officer Leang, had taken refuge in an alcove closed in with curtains, through the numerous slits of which we could distinguish the feeble rays of a lamp and much white vapour, which exhaled a fœtid odour, giving us plainly to understand that the chiefs of our escort were engaged in intoxicating themselves with opium. As for ourselves, alone and tranquil on the deck of the junk, we were pacing backwards and forwards, drawing the fresh morning air into our lungs, and watching the bustle of the port, and the smiling faces of a crowd of the townspeople, for whom we appeared to present the most astonishing spectacle they had ever seen. As for the crew of the vessel, not a man was there to be seen, with the exception of an old fellow, rolled up like a pin-cushion, near the helm, but who did not appear to concern himself at all about things below, and most likely still less about those above. He was hugging his knees, on which his chin rested; and since we had come on board, he had not quitted for a single moment, this comfortable and elegant attitude.

We asked him whether we were not soon going to set off. Then he rose up, and answered, looking all the while at the sky, "Who knows that? I am not the master—I am only the cook."

"Where is the master, then? Where are the sailors?"

"The master is at home, and the sailors are at the market."

On this information we resumed our walk, and the cook his favourite attitude. A European, who was still a novice in the Celestial Empire, might perhaps have become impatient, and made, as the phrase is, bad blood, on such an occasion.

After the lapse of two long hours, the sailors seem to have remembered that they had a junk in port, and, slowly and quietly, one after another, made his appearance. The master at length called over their names, and the crew being found complete, the plank between the deck and the shore was taken away. That was something; but we were still a long way off starting. Our two mandarins now came out of their opium den, and went to find the

master; and then began a dispute that seemed interminable, for no arrangement had yet been made about the price for our passage. By the time all these difficulties were smoothed, it was nearly noon; the sailors began their nasal song, as they worked at the capstan and unfurled the large matting sails; the great iron-wood anchor was soon up, and the breeze and the current bore us swiftly away, while a Chinese sailor kept up a sonorous tune, striking the *tam-tam* by way of salute to the shore.

We had promised ourselves an agreeable — indeed a magnificent — day. The morning, as we said, left nothing to desire, but the fine weather did not last. The sky soon became covered with clouds, and we had hardly been sailing a quarter of an hour before a pouring rain forced us to quit the deck and take refuge below, in the midst of a deafening noise and an air close to suffocation.

As we had but a short time before quitted the frozen mountains of Thibet, we suffered much in this species of stew-pan, where we seemed to breathe only the burning and nauseous vapours of tobacco and opium. After having been so often in danger of perishing from cold, we were now apparently likely to die of heat.

Whilst we were thus being *cured* in a corner of this great smoking room, our Chinese appeared perfectly at their ease. They panted a little from time to time; but we saw that on the whole they were happy, and that this state of things was perfectly agreeable to them. Master Ting especially seemed to be in a state of the highest self-satisfaction. After having smoked abundantly both tobacco and opium, and swallowed a considerable number of cups of tea, he began to warble his long litanies, doubtless to thank his patron, Kao-wang, for having thus far prospered his honest endeavours. We understood perfectly well, however, that the cause of his extreme satisfaction was the handsome profit he expected to make out of the journey; this being the case, his delightful humour was quite intelligible.

A young Chinese, named Wei-chan, who had been given to us for a private servant, and who appeared very much devoted to us, probably because he thought it his interest to do so, kept us a little *au courant* to the diplomatic manœuvres of our conductors.

This trip on the water we found had only been undertaken in consequence of a little prudent calculation. At every stage, the Mandarin of the place where we stopped was obliged to supply all the wants of the party, as well as the expenses of the road to the next stage; and to furnish bearers for the palanquins, and horses for the soldiers. These *corvées* cost considerable sums. Now Master Ting had made his little arrangements thus; he sent for-

ward his scribe along the route we were to have followed, to gather the appointed tribute, but graciously to inform the Mandarins that he would spare them all the trouble of the affair by proceeding by water. It was easy, as we were going down the river, to do in one day the distance of four stages, and as the hiring of a boat costs very little, the profits became enormous.

This is why Master Ting was reciting the litanies of Kao-wang with such a beaming countenance.

If our voyage had been but tolerably agreeable, we should have been happy to give him the opportunity of realising this little fortune; but it was abominable and more than once perilous. The rain never left off for a single moment; and as we had set off so late, night came on before we had gone half the way. The navigation of the Blue River, so safe and easy in the interior of China, when it has acquired its full development, and rolls its majestic volume of waters through vast plains, presents serious difficulties in the mountainous province of Sse-tchouen. Its course has sometimes the rapidity of a perfect torrent; and its bed is winding, and full of shoals which demand great skill and prudence in the navigation. This is why the viceroy had ordered that we should make the journey by land; but he had reckoned without his Master Ting, who could not resist speculating on our lives and his own. We did not utter a word of complaint or reproach; but we contented ourselves with forming, on our side, our little plan for the next day, which would, we flattered ourselves, check any inclination he might feel in future to follow the suggestions of his enterprising genius.

It was past midnight when we arrived at *Kien-tcheou*, a town of the third order. The night was profoundly dark, and the rain still falling heavily; the anchor was dropped as near as possible to the shore, where we could perceive a great deal of bustle, and many lanterns moving about in all directions; these were the persons sent from the various tribunals, and Ting's scribe, who were waiting for us.

The disembarkation was effected amidst tremendous vociferation and indescribable confusion. As soon as our palanquins had been put ashore, we entered them; and our bearers, feeling doubtless, after their thirty hours' rest, the want of a little exercise to put their blood into circulation, set off with us at a round pace. At the moment when they started, Master Ting bawled to them, at top of his voice, to be sure and take us to the Hotel of Accomplished Wishes.

At the corner of the street, however, we stopped the bearers, and desired them to proceed to the communal palace, for we intended to lodge there, and at no hotel; and they immediately obeyed, while

our escort probably directed their steps to the above-named Hotel of Accomplished Wishes. We soon arrived; but there was no appearance of our having been expected, for all the gates of the palace were shut. We told the bearers to make a noise; and it must be proclaimed to their honour, that they acquitted themselves of this duty in a manner there could be no mistake about, and fairly stunned us. A heap of great stones lay just handy, and in a moment they were sent flying against the door, which was soon opened, and a guardian of the palace made his appearance, in a very incomplete costume indeed, and not having, evidently, the most distant notion what the riot was about. When he had a little recovered from his consternation, we were able to enter into some explanations, from which it appeared, as we expected, that the guardians of the Koung-houan had not been informed of our arrival, and that there was nothing in readiness for our reception. This was, then, another manœuvre, *à la chinoise*, of Master Ting, and we had nothing for it but to betake ourselves to the Hotel of Accomplished Wishes, the name of which, as far as we were concerned, certainly had rather a satirical sound. We found there all the escort assembled, and Master Ting, and the officer *Leang*, hastened to assure us, that if no one had been drowned on the way, it was entirely owing to our merit; that every one had been sheltered under our good fortune, and so forth; and then they tried to explain to us how it was quite impossible that we should have been lodged at the communal palace. "Well," said we, "we are tired and hungry; let us have something to eat, and then go to bed, for it is long past midnight; we can settle other affairs to-morrow."

CHAP. V.

Disputes with the Mandarins of Kien-tcheou. — Intrigues to prevent us from going to the Communal Palace.—Magnificence of this Palace.—The Garden of Sse-ma-kouang.—Chinese Kitchen.— State of the Roads and Channels of Communication.—Some productions of the Province of Sse-tchouen.—Use of Tobacco, in Smoking and taking Snuff. — Tchoung-tching, a Town of the First Order. — Ceremonies observed by the Chinese in Visits and Conversations of Etiquette. — Nocturnal Apparition. — Watchmen and Criers of the Town. — Fires in China. — The addition of a Military Mandarin to our Escort.—Tchang-cheou-hien, a Town of the Third Order.—Release of Three Christian Prisoners. — Superstitious practices to obtain Rain. — The Dragon of Rain exiled by the Emperor.

Day had scarcely dawned, when Master Ting took it upon him to interrupt our first sleep, to announce to us that it was time to set off.

"Take yourself off, Master Ting," said we, "as quickly as you can; and, moreover, if any one else has the impudence to come disturbing us, we will get you degraded."

The door closed, and we turned round and went to sleep again, for we were worn out with fatigue. At noon we rose, quite refreshed and ready to begin the war with the Mandarins.

We turned our steps towards a neighbouring apartment, from which proceeded a whispering sound, as of a conversation carried on in a low voice. We opened the door, and found ourselves in the presence of a numerous and brilliant assembly, composed of the principal magistrates of the town. After saluting the company with the utmost solemnity, we perceived in the middle of the room a table, on which were arranged some little dishes for a dessert, the prelude *obligato* of every Chinese repast. Without any other explanation, we drew forward an arm-chair, and begged the company to be good enough to be seated. Our assurance seemed to create some astonishment; but a great fat Mandarin, the prefect of the town, pointed out the places of honour, and invited us to take them, which we immediately did without hesitation. This was not very modest on our part, nor quite conformable to the Chinese rites; but we needed, for the moment, to make an imposing impression.

The guests were numerous. The dessert was attacked in silence, every one contenting himself with exchanging a few forms of politeness in a low voice. They glanced at us by stealth, as if to make out from our countenances the nature of our sentiments. There was evidently a feeling of general embarrassment. At length a young civil functionary, probably the boldest of the troop, ventured to reconnoitre the ground.

"Yesterday," said he, "was a disagreeable day; the navigation of the Blue River must have been far from pleasant; but to-day the weather is splendid. It is a pity that you did not set out at an early hour in the morning; you would have arrived at *Tchoung-tching* before nightfall. Tchoung-tching is the best town in the province."

"Certainly," repeated the others in chorus; "there is nothing comparable to Tchoung-tching. One finds there every thing one can wish for. What a difference between this country and that! Here poverty is excessive — we live only in privation."

"It is not yet very late," resumed the young functionary; "you can get as far this evening as the communal palace on the road, pass the night there, and arrive to-morrow at Tchoung-tching before noon."

"Oh!" added another, "the thing is easy enough; for the roads are as flat as my hand, and the country is enchantingly beautiful; you travel constantly under the shade of large trees."

"Have the bearers of the palanquins been told?" cried the fat prefect of the town, addressing the numerous domestics who filled the hall. "Quick! let some one go and see for them, for our two illustrious guests are determined to set off as soon as they have eaten their rice. They are in a great hurry, and cannot honour us any longer with their presence."

"Wait a moment," said we; "we are in no hurry. It does not appear that any one here is acquainted with our affairs. In the first place, we have to change palanquins. Those that were given us at Tching-tou-fou will not do. Eh? Master Ting! Is it not here that we were to get the good palanquins with four bearers?"

"No, no!" cried all the Mandarins in concert; "a little place like this! How in the world could you find good palanquins ready here? You must order them beforehand."

"Very well; order them, then. We are in no hurry. Whether we get to Canton a moon sooner or later makes very little difference to us. In the mean time we can amuse ourselves here, by visiting the town and its environs."

"In such a poor place as this," said the prefect, "there are no skilful workmen to be found. Nobody here knows how to make any other palanquins than those little bamboo ones, for two bearers. The people of this part of the country know nothing of luxury; very few of them have enough to live on. You must go to Tchoung-tching to find great manufactories."

"Yes, yes! you must go to Tchoung-tching," was echoed from all quarters; "Tchoung-tching is the place for fine palanquins. Every one knows that the Mandarins for eighteen provinces round all send for their palanquins to Tchoung-tching."

"Is that true?" said we turning to Master Ting.

"Certainly it is true. Who here would dare to utter lies?"

"In that case, then, find a man who understands these things, and send him directly to Tchoung-tching to get some palanquins. We will wait here. We need a little rest, and we will profit by this opportunity. We speak calmly; but this decision is irrevocable. We shall not alter it."

The Mandarins looked at one another quite stupefied.

During the whole of this interesting discussion, the dinner had been going on; and having taken our last cup of tea, we rose to return to our chamber and leave the Mandarins to settle the matter among them.

They had a long debate, which ended in the Chinese fashion, by sending deputations to endeavour to make us change our minds. First came the civil Mandarins, then the military ones, then both orders united; but all found us inflexible. They invented the most absurd tales; they heaped lie upon lie, to prove to us that we must set out immediately. But to all this we had but one answer: "When men like us take a resolution, it is irrevocable."

At last it was announced to us, that palanquins had been brought, and they begged us to come down into the court-yard to examine them. We made no objection; and, after casting a glance at them, said, "Very well; let them be bought."

But thereupon arose a new question. The Mandarins looked at one another, and asked, "Who is to pay?" The discussion became lively, and although we were quite uninterested in it, we asked permission to state our opinion.

"It is very evident," said we, "that the town of Kien-tcheou is not obliged to provide us with palanquins."

"That is conformable to reason," exclaimed eagerly the Mandarins of Kien-tcheou.

"That ought to have been done at Tching-tou-fou, whence we began our journey; but it would seem that the person who procured us palanquins there, did not act in conformity with the rules of honour."

"That's the thing," cried the Mandarins; "doubtless he kept for himself a part of the money that was allotted for them."

"Well, we must repair this error, and it does not seem to us that there is any great difficulty. Yesterday, in our passage on the Blue River, we made two days' journey. Master Ting got the money for two stages, and only had to pay for the hire of a boat. It does seem to us, therefore, that he both can and ought to pay the price of the palanquins."

The Mandarins of Kien-tcheou burst out laughing, and said our solution of the problem was capital. Master Ting was foaming with rage, and uttering yells as if his inside were being torn out.

"Compose yourself," said we, "and pay the dealer the price of these palanquins with a good grace; otherwise we must immediately write to the viceroy that you made us travel on the Blue River." This threat had a wonderful effect, and our conductor began mournfully to count out the cash.

The evening had come and still there was no talk of our going away; but the Mandarins of Kien-tcheou appeared greatly diverted at the misadventure of Master Ting, not at all suspecting that their turn was coming next.

On the following day as soon as it was broad daylight, Master Ting presented himself very modestly, to ask whether he might send for the bearers, and at the same time he delivered to us some visiting cards, by which the principal Mandarins of the town expressed to us their good wishes for our journey.

We replied, that he might send the bearers; because it was our intention to go to the communal palace and pass the day there, as we declined lodging at the Hotel of Accomplished Wishes. Our conductor, who had not yet recovered from the shock of the evening before, looked at us with so astonished a face that we were obliged to repeat our words with a little more emphasis. The moment he was sure of our meaning, he left the room and gave the alarm to the Mandarins, who came running one after the other to assure themselves of the truth of the incredible report.

It was the prefect of the town whom we most wished to see; so, as soon as he arrived, we mentioned that he ought to have received from Sse-tchouen a despatch, in which it was directed that we were to be lodged in the communal palace; and that we could not understand why, at Kien-tcheou, the orders of the viceroy had not been executed; that for various reasons we wished to quit the hotel and go and pass a day at the communal palace: first, not to establish a bad precedent, and create the temptation to do elsewhere what had been done here; secondly, because being obliged to write afterwards to the viceroy, to give him an account of the manner in which we had been treated on the road, it would be painful to us to have to point out that at Kien-tcheou they had not executed his orders. "Besides," we added, "the route we have before us is long and fatiguing; we suffered much inconvenience on the Blue River, and we should be very glad of a day's rest."

All these were excellent reasons, but the prefect could see nothing but the expense of entertaining so numerous a party for a whole day at the palace. He did not dare to give his true reason, however, and say at once that it would cost too much; the Chinese always prefer less angular methods; a lie is much more convenient. The prefect declared that we should be conferring upon him infinite happiness by remaining another day at Kien-tcheou. Men from the great kingdom of France! — that was indeed a rarity! Moreover our presence could not fail to bring good fortune to the country; but the communal palace was uninhabitable, it was in so horrible a state that a man of the lowest class could not be lodged in it. It was full of workmen and of the materials for repairs that were about to be made in it. Besides

this, there were in the grand saloon seven or eight coffins, containing the dead bodies of official persons of the district, waiting till the members of their respective families should come and take them away to bury them in their native places.

The prefect calculated a good deal on the moral effect of this last argument. While he was speaking in the most sombre and lugubrious manner of these coffins and dead bodies, he looked attentively into our faces, to see whether he had not alarmed us. But we were rather more inclined to laugh, for we were convinced there was not one word of truth in all that he had been saying.

We replied in a somewhat ironical tone, that since probably the viceroy was not aware of the communal palace having been converted into a cemetery, it would be well to write to him to that effect; since if he happened to travel this way himself, he might not, perhaps, find it pleasant to take up his abode among coffins and dead bodies; but that as far as we were concerned it did not make the slightest difference, as we were not much afraid of the living, and not at all of the dead. We should go to the palace, therefore, and did not doubt but that we should be able to make ourselves very comfortable there. The prefect did his utmost to deter us from this "almost insane" project; and at last, to have done with him, we told him that he might settle the matter at his good pleasure, provided only that he would write and sign a statement that we, having wished to rest for a day at the communal palace of Kien-tcheou, had not been allowed to do so on account of its being in an uninhabitable state. The prefect perfectly understood our meaning; and turning to some subaltern officers who were in waiting, he said: "I am of the same way of thinking as our guests; it is absolutely necessary they should have a day of repose. Let orders be immediately sent to the Koung-kouan to take away the coffins and put things as they ought to be, and let the guardians take care not to be again guilty of the same fault." Ten minutes afterwards we were proceeding in state, in our new palanquins to the communal palace. As we went out, we just whispered in the ear of Master Ting, "Remember, if we are not properly treated, we will remain two days instead of one." Strange country, in which it is necessary to behave in this way in order not to be oppressed and ill-treated yourself.

It would have been really a pity to leave Kien-tcheou without seeing this magnificent palace; and when we had gone over it, we could not help thinking that the Mandarins had been unwilling to let us come in, lest, charmed by its beauty and convenience, we

should be unwilling to go out again. After traversing a vast court planted with trees, we ascended to the main building by thirty beautifully cut stone steps. The apartments were spacious, lofty, exquisitely clean, and deliciously cool and fresh; the furniture was richly ornamented with gilding, in an infinite variety of patterns; the hangings were of gorgeous red or yellow silk, the carpets made of woven bamboo-peeling, and painted in the liveliest colours; there were antique bronzes, immense porcelain urns, vases of the most elegant forms, in which flowers and shrubs of the most whimsical appearance were growing: such were the ornaments that we found in this superb abode. Behind the house was an immense garden, in which Chinese industry had exhausted its resources to imitate the freedom and even the capricious sports of nature. It would be difficult to give an exact idea of these curious creations, the taste for which prevailed for a long time in Europe, and on which the rather unsuitable name of English garden has been bestowed by us. There is a little Chinese poem entitled "The Garden of *Sse-ma-kouang*," in which that illustrious historian and great statesman of the Celestial Empire *, has been pleased to describe all the wonders of his rural retreat; and it will give us much pleasure to offer a translation of this pretty fragment of Chinese literature, which will at the same time throw some light on the character of its author, that famous Sse-ma-kouang who played so important a part under the dynasty of the *Song*, in a social revolution hereafter to be mentioned: —

"Let others," says Sse-ma-kouang, "build palaces to contain their vexations, and display their vanity; I have made myself a retreat to amuse my leisure, and converse with my friends. Twenty acres of land have sufficed for my purpose. In the midst is a great hall, in which I have collected 5000 volumes, to interrogate the wise and converse with the ancient. Towards the south is a pavilion, in the midst of the waters of a rivulet that falls from the hills on the west. Here it forms a deep basin, which afterwards divides into five branches, like the claws of a leopard, and innumerable swans swim on its surface or sport on its banks. On the borders of the first, which flings itself down in repeated cascades, there rises a steep overhanging rock, curved like an elephant's trunk; and the top of this sustains an open pleasure-house to take the fresh air, and see the rubies with which morning adorns the sun at his rising. The second branch divides

* Sse-ma-kouang was first minister of the Empire, towards the end of the eleventh century, under the dynasty of Song.

itself, a little way off, into two canals, round which winds a gallery, with a double terrace, bordered with roses and pomegranate trees. The branch from the west bends in the form of a bow towards the north of a solitary bower, where it forms a little islet, covered with sand and shells of various colours; one part is planted with trees always green, the other is adorned with a cottage of reeds and thatch, resembling those of fishermen. The other two branches seem alternately to seek and to fly from one another, as they follow the declivity of a meadow enamelled with flowers, which they keep ever fresh: sometimes they diverge from their beds to form little pearly basins, framed in emerald turf; then they leave the level of the meadow, and descend in two narrow channels, and the waters break against the rocks that oppose their passage, and roar and dash into foam, and then roll off in silver waves, through the winding course they are obliged to take.

"North of the great hall are several summer pavilions, scattered at random about hills which rise one above the other, like a mother above her children; some hang on the declivity of a hill, some are nestled in little gorges, and are only half seen. All the hills are shaded by groves of tufted bamboo, and intersected by gravel paths to which the sun's rays never penetrate.

"To the eastward speads out a small plain divided into flower beds, square and oval, and defended from the cold winds of the north by a wood of ancient cedars. All these beds are filled with odoriferous plants, medicinal herbs, flowers, and shrubs. Never does spring leave this delicious spot. A little forest of lemon, pomegranate, and orange trees, always loaded with flowers and fruit, completes the prospect. In the midst of this forest, is a mount of verdure which you ascend by a gentle winding slope, that passes several times round it, like the volutes of a shell, and which gradually diminishes to the summit. Here and there at short distances, you find seats of soft turf, which invite to repose, and to the contemplation of the garden from various points of view.

"On the west, an avenue of weeping-willows, with their long pendant branches, guides you to the banks of a stream, which falls a few paces further from the brink of a rock covered with ivy and wild grasses of various colours. The environs exhibit a barrier of pointed rocks, fancifully heaped together, and rising in an amphitheatre in a wild and rustic manner. At the bottom of these is a deep grotto, which enlarges as you advance into it, till it forms a kind of irregular saloon with a dome-like roof. The light enters this apartment by an aperture tolerably large, but veiled by branches of the honeysuckle and wild vine. This grotto affords a cool retreat from the burning heats of the dog-days; masses of

rock scattered here and there, or broad platforms cut out of the solid rock, form the seats. A little fountain issues from one side, and falls in trickling threads upon the floor, where, after winding about through many crystal rills, it unites again in a reservoir which forms the bath, and afterwards discharges itself into a pond below the grotto. This pond leaves only a narrow path between the shapeless grotesque rocks by which it is enclosed; and these are inhabited by a whole nation of rabbits, that startle the countless swarms of fish in the pond, as much as they are startled by them.

"How charming is this solitude! The broad surface of its watery basin is sprinkled with little islets of shrubs, the larger of which serve as aviaries, and are filled with all kinds of birds. You can pass easily from one to the other by blocks of stone that rise out of the water, and little wooden bridges, some straight, some arched, some in zig-zag, that cross it. When the lilies with which the borders of the pond are planted, produce their flowers, it appears crowned with purple and scarlet — like the horizon of the seas of the South, when the sun rests on it.

"To leave this solitude you must either turn back, or cross the chain of steep rocks by which it is surrounded. You can ascend to the summit of it by a sort of rude staircase roughly hewn with the pickaxe; and there you find a simple cabinet, unadorned indeed, but yet adorned enough by the view of an immense plain through which the Kiang rolls its flood through rice fields and villages. The innumerable barks with which this mighty river is covered, the labourers tilling the ground, the travellers who are passing along the highways, animate this enchanting prospect; and the azure mountains which terminate the horizon, afford repose and recreation to the sight.

"When I am weary of writing and composing in the midst of my books in my great hall, I throw myself into a boat which I row myself, and go and seek the pleasures of my garden. Sometimes I land on the fishing-island, where, with a broad straw hat on my head to protect me from the ardent rays of the sun, I amuse myself with enticing the fish that sport in the water, and study our human passions in their mistakes; or at other times, with my quiver on my shoulder, and my bow in my hand, I climb over the rocks, and there, lying in wait, like a traitor, for the rabbits; as they issue forth, I pierce them with my arrows at the entrance of their holes. Alas! they are wiser than we are, and they fly from what is dangerous to them; if they spy me coming, not one will show himself.

"When I walk in my garden I gather the medicinal plants that

I wish to keep; if a flower pleases me, I pluck it, and enjoy its scent; if I see one suffering from thirst, I water it, and its neighbours profit by the shower. How many times have ripe fruits restored to me the appetite that the sight of luxurious dishes had taken away. My pomegranates and my peaches are the better for being gathered by my own hand, and the friends to whom I send them are always pleased by my doing so. Do I see a young bamboo that I wish to leave to grow, I cut it, or I bend and interweave its branches to free the path. The summit of a rock, the banks of a stream, the depths of a wood, all are welcome to me when I wish to repose myself. I enter a pavilion, to watch a stork making war on a fish; but scarcely have I entered, than forgetting what brought me there, I seize my *kin**, and challenge the birds around to rivalry.

"The last rays of the sun surprise me sometimes whilst I am contemplating in silence the tender anxieties of a swallow for her little ones, or the stratagems of a hawk to gain possession of his prey. The moon rises, and I am still sitting there; this is an additional pleasure. The murmuring of the waters, the rustling of the leaves in the wind, the beauty of the heavens, plunge me into a delightful reverie; all nature speaks to my soul; I go wandering about, and listening, and night has reached the middle of its course before I have reached the threshold of my door.

"My friends come too, occasionally, to interrupt my solitude, to read to me their works, or to hear mine. Wine enlivens our frugal repasts, philosophy seasons them; and whilst, at court, men are seeking voluptuous pleasure, fostering calumny, forging fetters, and laying snares, we are invoking wisdom, and offering her our hearts. My eyes are constantly turned towards her, but alas! her rays only beam on me through a thousand clouds: let them be dispersed, even were it by a storm, and this solitude will become for me the temple of felicity. But what do I say? I, a husband, a father, a citizen, a man of letters,—I am bound by a thousand duties, my life is not my own. Adieu, my dear garden! adieu! the love of kindred and of country calls me to the city; keep thy pleasures that they may some day dissipate anew some new cares, and save my virtue from their temptations."

The garden of the Communal Palace of Kien-tcheou did not certainly present all the superb features described by the pencil of Sse-ma-kouang, but it was nevertheless one of the finest we had

* A sort of Chinese violin.

seen in the Celestial Empire. We passed the remainder of the morning in it, and were never tired of admiring the patience of the Chinese, in cutting, out of shrubs and fragments of rock, all the eccentric figures suggested by their whimsical and fertile imaginations.

We were seated under the portico of a miniature pagoda, when Master Ting came to inform us that dinner was ready. The principal functionaries of the place, in rich and brilliant costume, were already assembled in the hall, and their reception of us was most amiable and gracious. We overwhelmed each other with compliments and courtesy, and invited each other reciprocally to the most honourable places. To put an end to this polite contest, we said that the Koung-kouan being the house of the traveller, we ought to be considered as at home, and should, therefore, of course, treat our guests according to the rites. We assigned, therefore, to each of the company a place according to his rank, reserving the lowest for ourselves, and this proceeding was very graciously received. They began to think we were not quite such uncivilised barbarians as they had taken us to be the evening before.

The banquet was splendid, and served according to all the formalities of Chinese etiquette. On the part of the guests, there could be nothing more desired; indeed, they were so excessively amiable, that we could not for a moment doubt of their having the most lively and earnest desire to get rid of us on the next day.

We will not attempt to describe a Chinese dinner; not but that it might present some details capable of interesting Europeans, but they are already pretty well known, and we should fear trying the reader's patience too far. We remember, also, seeing in the "Mélanges Posthumes" of Abel Remusat, the following passage, which would prevent us from attempting to give the nomenclature of the dishes, even had we been so inclined:—

"Some years ago (says this clever and learned orientalist), the officers of a European embassy returning from China, where they had cause to applaud themselves for the success of their operations, thought proper to favour the readers of the 'Gazette' with a description of a repast that had been given to them, they said, by the Mandarins of some frontier town. Never, according to their account, had people been better entertained; the quality of the dishes, the number of the services, the play performed in the interval, all was exactly described, and produced an admirable effect. But it happened, that some persons who were readers of

old books, had a kind of recollection of having seen something like that before, and, on inquiry, it appeared that more than a hundred years back, exactly the same dinner, composed of the very same dishes, and served in precisely the same manner, had been given to some Jesuit missionaries, who had written an account of it. There were many people, however, for whom it was all quite new, and though it may be true, in general, that 'a warmed-up dinner is good for nothing,' in this particular case it was found very acceptable; and the public, always fond of particulars concerning manners and customs, and even of culinary details, cared very little to know who had been the real *diners*. Whoever they might have been, it found just the same amusements in the singularities of the Chinese table etiquette, and the gravity with which the guests, while eating their rice, executed manœuvres and evolutions that would have done honour to a well-trained regiment of infantry."

Since the time when M. Abel Remusat alluded thus playfully to this famous Chinese dinner, it has been served over again many times, especially after the last war of China with England. But the new editions of it that have been published both in English and French have been unfortunately so much corrected and revised as a little to damage its accuracy. Under pretence, that in the course of a hundred years, the Chinese may have made some discoveries in the culinary art, it has been found amusing to make the public believe that they prepared dishes with castor oil, and that some of their favourite dainties were shark's fins, fish-gizzards, goose-feet, peacock's combs, and other delicacies of the same description.

Such dishes as these could scarcely have been met with by any one who had made acquaintance with Chinese cookery elsewhere than at Canton, a few yards from the English factories; or, in fact, as Europeans newly landed in China are always very anxious to get invited to a Chinese dinner, in the hope of meeting with some extraordinary things, it is by no means impossible that some of the Canton merchants may have been mischievous enough to amuse themselves at their expense, and serve them up dishes invented expressly for them, and which had never before made their appearance at a Chinese table.

Peacocks are so rare in China that we have ourselves never seen any there. The feathers of this bird are sent to the court by tributary kingdoms, and the Emperor gives them as a special favour to the highest functionaries, with permission to wear them

in their caps on state occasions, as an ornament. How, then, can we imagine that dishes made of the peacock's combs can be common at Chinese dinner parties? The castor oil plant is not unknown in China; it is cultivated extensively in the northern provinces, but the oil is used merely for lighting and so far is it from being regarded as a favourite condiment, that when one day, at a Mission not far from Pekin, we wished to give a small dose of it to one of our brothers who was ill, our Chinese converts vehemently opposed our doing so, saying that this oil was a poison. We do not deny, nevertheless, that Europeans may have seen it on dinner tables at Canton, but we feel quite sure that, in that case, they have been made the victims of some mystification, and that when they were amusing themselves with the absurd tastes of the Chinese, the latter were in their turn laughing at the credulity of the Europeans.

It is certain, however, that a real Chinese dinner would be a very odd thing in the eyes of a stranger, especially if he were one of those who think, as some people do, that there is only one way of living. To begin dinner with the dessert, and end it with the soup; to drink the wine smoking hot, out of little china cups, and have your food brought to you ready cut up into small pieces, and to be presented with a couple of sticks, instead of a knife and fork, to eat it with; to have, instead of napkins, a provision of little bits of coloured silk paper by the side of your plate, which, as you use, the attendants carry off; to leave your place between the courses, to smoke or amuse yourself; and to raise your chop-sticks to your forehead, and then place them horizontally upon your cup, to signify that you have finished your dinner;—all these things would doubtless seem very odd, and create the curiosity of Europeans. The Chinese, on the other hand, can never get over their surprise at our way of dining. They ask how we can like to drink cold fluids, and what can have put it into our heads to make use of a trident to carry food to our mouths, at the risk of pricking our lips or poking our eyes out. They think it very droll to see nuts put on the table in their shell, and ask why our servants cannot take the trouble to peel the fruit, and take the bones out of the meat. They are themselves certainly not very difficult in the nature of their food, and like such things as fried silkworms and preserved larvæ, but they cannot understand the predilection of our epicures for *high* game, nor for cheese that appears to belong to the class of animated beings.

One day, at Macao, we had the honour to be seated at the dinner table of a representative of a European power, when a magnificent dish of snipes was brought in. But what a disappointment! The

Chinese Vatel had taken out the entrails of this incomparable bird. He knew not what a perfumed and savoury treasure the snipe holds in its stomach. The cook was forced to appear before the arbiters of taste, who received him with wrathful looks, and the delinquent was struck with consternation on hearing that he had committed a culinary crime too heavy to be a second time pardoned. Hoping to make amends, the unfortunate cook, a few days afterwards, took care to serve up in all their integrity some birds that were not snipes, and thereupon a new storm of wrath fell on the devoted head of the poor Chinese, and was followed by his dismissal, in a state of utter despair that he should ever be able to exercise his art in a manner conformable to the astoundingly capricious tastes of Europeans.

All the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, without exception, are gifted with a remarkable aptitude for cookery. If you want a cook, it is the easiest thing in the world to supply the want; you have but to take the first Chinese you can catch, and after a few days' practice he will acquit himself of his duties to admiration.

What appears most surprising, is the extreme simplicity of means with which these marvels are performed. One single iron pot suffices to execute promptly the most difficult combinations. The Mandarins are in general pretty much of *gourmands*, and carry the business and refinements of the table to a tolerably high pitch. They have in their service cooks who possess a vast store of receipts, and secrets to disguise dishes in a thousand ways, and change their natural flavour; and when they desire to show off their skill, they really perform surprising feats. The cook at Kien-tcheou gave us some most incontestable proofs of talent, and his dinner merited and received the praises of all the guests. During the whole day, the Mandarins of Kien-tcheou behaved in the most admirable manner, and on the following morning we resolved, by way of return, to afford them the satisfaction of seeing us go away. We parted most excellent friends, but without any very particular wish to meet again.

The roads that we now traversed were far from being equal to those in the environs of Tching-tou-fou, and indeed the system of roads in China is far from being perfect. The communication by land is generally inconvenient, and often dangerous.

In the neighbourhood of the great towns the roads are sufficiently wide, but by degrees as you advance they grow narrower, till at last they sometimes vanish altogether. Then the travellers make their way wherever they can, through fields, quagmires, and rocky barren tracts.

If you come to a brook over which the local government has not thought proper to make a bridge, you must take off your shoes and stockings and wade through it. But very often you find some poor creatures stationed on the banks, who make a business of carrying travellers on their shoulders, from one side to the other, for the value of a few sapecks. All this route, nevertheless, still bears the name of a great high road.

This deplorable state of things has not always existed in China; formerly, it appears, there were means of communication that left nothing to desire, and in almost all the provinces you may still see remains of these fine roads, paved with broad flag-stones, and bordered with magnificent trees. In the Annals, especial mention is made of the superb roads that, under the Song dynasty, traversed the Empire from one end to the other; and the dynasty of *Yuen* added to this an admirable system of canals, that increased still more the facility of travelling and the transport of merchandise. But these great works have been abandoned under the Mantchoo-Tartar Emperors, who, instead of maintaining them, have even hastened their destruction. Trees have been cut down, flag-stones torn up, and the land annexed to the neighbouring fields; indeed, with the system of pillage that prevails at present all over the Empire, we were almost surprised to find a single tree standing, or a flag-stone in its place. The canals have suffered less, and the government has even occasionally taken some pains to maintain them. They are, however, rapidly deteriorating. The famous Imperial canal, which traverses the Empire from north to south, is dry the greater part of the year, and scarcely serves any other purpose than that of transporting the tributes of corn and other natural productions to the public granaries at Pekin.

At the distance of one day's journey from Kien-tcheou, the road becomes mountainous and irregular, and the country less beautiful and less rich. The aspect of the population, too, is no longer the same; their appearance is rougher and coarser, and their manners are by no means so polished. The dilapidation of the farms and the dirtiness of the villages show that the condition of the people is less prosperous.

The mountains, nevertheless, have nothing wild and rugged in their aspect; their summits are crowned with flowers, and their slopes and valleys present abundant harvests of *kao-leang* maize, sugar-cane, and tobacco. The kao-leang is a variety of the *Holcus Sorghum*, of which we in France make nothing but brooms; but it is cultivated on a large scale, and with great care, in China. It attains an astonishing size; its stalks are solid enough to be used

with advantage in the construction of farm-houses and palings; the ears furnish a considerable quantity of large seeds, which the poor eat instead of rice; and from which, by distillation, a liquor may be obtained containing a large proportion of alcohol. The Chinese attach in general little importance to the culture of maize, and it is almost always of indifferent quality. They gather the ears before they are completely ripe, and when they are still quite milky, and devour them thus, after slight roasting. Sugar is very common in China, and is obtained from the cane, which grows luxuriantly in the southern provinces; but the Chinese do not know how to purify it and give it the whiteness and brilliancy it obtains in the European refineries. Their factories deliver it in the state of moist sugar, or simply crystallised. The cultivation of tobacco is immense, although this plant, which is at present spread over the whole surface of the globe, and is in use among all nations, even those least in contact with civilised life, was not known in China, it is said, till a very recent period. It is stated to have been imported into the Central Empire by the Mantchoos; and the Chinese were much astonished when they first saw their conquerors inhaling fire through long tubes, and "eating smoke." It cost them a good deal to imitate the accomplishment; but now they are passionately, enthusiastically devoted to it. By a curious coincidence this plant is called in the Mantchoo language *tambakou*, but the Chinese designate it simply by the word meaning *smoke*. Thus they say they cultivate in their fields the "smoke leaf;" they chew smoke, and they name their pipe the "smoke funnel."

The use of tobacco has become universal throughout the Empire; men, women, children, everybody smokes almost without ceasing. They go about their daily business, cultivate the fields, ride on horseback and write, constantly with the pipe in their mouths. During their meals, if they stop for a moment it is to smoke a pipe; and if they wake in the night, they are sure to amuse themselves in the same way. It may be easily supposed therefore, that in a country containing 300,000,000 of smokers, without counting the tribes of Tartary and Thibet, who lay in their stocks in the Chinese markets, the culture of tobacco has become very important. The cultivation is entirely free, every one being at liberty to plant it in his garden, or in the open fields, in whatever quantity he chooses, and afterwards to sell it, wholesale or retail, just as he likes, without the Government interfering with him in the slightest degree. The most celebrated tobacco is that obtained in *Leao-tong*, in Mantchuria, and in the province of Sse-tchouen. The leaves, before becoming articles of commerce, undergo various

preparatory processes, according to the practice of the locality. In the south they cut them into extremely fine filaments; the people of the north content themselves with drying them and rubbing them up coarsely, and then stuff them at once into their pipes.

Snuff-takers are less numerous in China than smokers; tobacco in powder, or, as the Chinese say, "smoke for the nose," is little used except by the Mantchoo Tartars and Mongols, and among the Mandarins and lettered classes. The Tartars are real amateurs, and snuff is with them an object of the most important consideration. For the Chinese aristocracy, on the contrary, it is a mere luxury—a habit that they try to acquire—a whim. The custom of taking snuff was introduced into China by the old missionaries, who resided at the court. They used to get the snuff from Europe for themselves, and some of the Mandarins tried it, and found it good. By degrees the custom spread; people who wished to appear fashionable liked to be taking this "smoke for the nose," and Pekin is still *par excellence*, the locality of snuff-takers. The first dealers in it made immense fortunes. The French tobacco was the most esteemed; and as it happened at this time that it had for a stamp the ancient emblem of the three *fleur de lis*, the mark has never been forgotten; and the three *fleur de lis* are still in Pekin the only sign of a dealer in tobacco.

The Chinese have now for a long time manufactured their own snuff; but they do not subject it to any fermentation, and it is not worth much. They merely pulverise the leaves, sift the powder till it is as fine as flour, and afterwards perfume it with flowers and essences. The Chinese snuff-boxes are little vials made of crystal, porcelain, or precious stones. They are sometimes very elegant in their form, and are cut with great taste and sold at immense prices. A little silver or ivory spatula, with which the pinch is taken out, is fitted to the stopper.

The sun had not quite set when we arrived at Tchoung-king, a town of the first order, and after Tching-tou-fou, the most important of the province of Sse-tchouen; it is advantageously situated on the left bank of the Blue River. On the other side, opposite to Tchoung-king, is another great town, which would only make one with the first mentioned, but for the great breadth of the river. It is a great centre of commerce, and a depôt for the merchandise of almost all the provinces of the Empire.

There is also here a numerous and flourishing Christian community, as the Ambassador Ki-chan, and the Viceroy Pao-king, had already informed us. We expected, consequently, to receive

visits from the principal Christians, as they could not fail to have been aware of our arrival, but no one appeared. In the evening we expressed our surprise at this to Master Ting, who then admitted that in fact a great number of persons had presented themselves, but that they had not been permitted to enter, as they wore no costume of ceremony, and had the appearance of being tiresome, vulgar people. "They did say, indeed," added he, "that they belonged to your illustrious and sublime religion, the religion of the Lord of Heaven, but we did not believe them."

The guardians of the Communal Palace were certainly in some measure to blame in this matter; but we did not wish to complain, as it was possible they might think themselves in the right. It had been agreed, in order to protect us from the annoyance of incessant crowds of visitors, that no one should be admitted to us in the Communal Palaces, without their observing all the forms and ceremonies prescribed by the Rites for official visits of etiquette. In the "Mélanges" of Oriental literature by M. Abel Remusat, some tolerably exact details are given concerning the manner of making ceremonious visits in China, borrowed from a Chinese manuscript in the Imperial library.

"Much has been said concerning Chinese politeness, the formalities which it imposes every moment, and on the smallest occasions. It has been asserted, not quite without truth, that, in accordance with these, a conversation between men not connected by friendship becomes a mere preconcerted dialogue, in which each repeats a part he has learnt by heart; but the specimens of this polite dialogue that has been inserted in some accounts are not in general very accurate. Those which Fourmont has given, after Father Varo, are full of error. Although most people know something of the exaggerated forms of expression, which among ancient nations appear to be the product of long-continued habits of social life, it is still curious to see in detail how far it is possible to carry these refinements of urbanity, by which every one endeavours to show his own good breeding."

To judge of this point as relating to the Chinese, we must translate literally the customary forms of speech; and in order to compare the manners of different nations, in this respect, we must have an exact interpretation of a Chinese conversation. But I will first explain the general principles of visiting, for a matter of this importance deserves to be treated methodically.

It is a custom in China, as it is in Europe, to get rid of a visitor you do not wish to see, by saying you are not at home,

without being over anxious that he should really believe it; or you have it stated that you are indisposed, overwhelmed with business, and so on. The servants are instructed, on such occasions, to take the visiting cards, and inquire the addresses of the visitors, in order that the master may, in a few days, return the visits he has *not* received.

In a Chinese romance there is a scene of three lettered Chinese, who are amusing themselves with making verses, and drinking warm wine, when a very troublesome and disagreeable old Mandarin is announced.

"Stupid fellow," says the master to his servant; "why didn't you say I was not at home?"

"I did," replies the servant, "but he saw the palanquins of these two noble visitors before the door, and he would not believe me."

Thereupon the master rises, puts on his cap of ceremony, and runs with affected eagerness to meet the disagreeable visitor, whom he overwhelms with compliments, while the two learned guests, who detest him, vie with the master of the house in their polite welcome. Would any one believe that this scene, which is well described, was represented as passing at a hundred and four degrees of longitude from Paris?

He who intends paying a visit usually sends a servant some hours before, with a note to the person he wishes to see, to inquire whether he is at home, and to beg him not to go out if he has leisure to receive the visit. This is a mark of deference and respect for those whom you wish to see in their own houses. The note is on a sheet of red paper, larger or smaller according to the rank and dignity of the persons, and the degree of respect to be testified. The paper is folded once or twice, and you only write on the second page, in such words as these, "Your disciple, or your younger brother, So-and-so, has come to bow his head to the ground before you, and to offer you his respects."

This phrase is written in very large letters when you wish to mingle a certain air of stateliness with your courtesy; and the characters become smaller and smaller in proportion to the interest that one has in appearing humble and respectful.

This note having been presented to the porter, if the master accepts the visit, he replies verbally, "It will give me pleasure, and I beg him to come." If you are busy, or have some reason for not receiving the visit, the answer is — "I am much obliged; I thank him for the trouble he proposes to take." But if the

visitor be a person of superior rank, it is — "My lord does me an honour that I had not dared to hope for."

These sorts of visits are seldom declined in China.

If no note has been received to announce the visit, which only happens with common people, or in case of pressing business, the visitor may be requested to wait, but he is to be told what occupation prevents the host from receiving him: "My master begs you to be seated for a moment — he is combing his hair — or dressing himself." But if the visit has been announced previously by a note, the master of the house must put on fine clothes, and hold himself in readiness to receive the guests at the door of the house, or as he alights from his palanquin, saying, "I beg you to enter." The two leaves of the centre door must be opened, for it would be impolite to allow the guest to enter by a side one. Great people have their palanquins carried in, or even ride in on horseback to the foot of the staircase, which leads to the hall of reception. The master of the house then places himself at their right hand, and afterwards passes to their left, saying, "I beg you to go first," and accompanies them, keeping always a little behind.

In a room where company is received, the seats ought to be arranged in two parallel lines, one before the other. In entering you begin, from the very bottom of the room, to make your bows,— that is to say, you turn towards your host, making one step backward, and bow till your hands, which are kept clasped, touch the ground. In the provinces of the south of China, the south side is the most honourable; but in the north it is quite the contrary. Of course the most honourable side is to be offered to the guest; but he, by an ingenious piece of courtesy, may in two words change the state of things, and say, *Pe li*, that is, "We are now observing the ceremony of the north country," which implies, "I hope that in placing me to the south you are assigning me the least distinguished place."

But the master of the house politely hastens to frustrate the humble intentions of his guest, by saying, *Nan li*, "Not at all, sir; it is the ceremony of the south, and you are, therefore, in your proper place." Sometimes the visitor himself affects to take the least honourable, but then the host excuses himself, saying, "I should not dare;" and, passing before his guest, taking care not to turn his back on him, he proceeds to his proper position, a little behind. Then they both bow, and if the master of the house has any relations who live with him, the bows have to be repeated as many times as there are persons to salute. These

manœuvres last for some time, and as long as they do, nothing else is said than *Pou-kan, pou-kan,* "I should not dare."

One piece of politeness, which is the due of great people, and which does not displease those of inferior rank, is to cover the chairs with little carpets made on purpose. Then there are more antics to be performed. The guest refuses to take the chair of state; the host insists; he makes a feint of wiping the chair with the skirt of his robe; and the stranger does the same for the chair that he is to occupy: finally, the guest bows to his chair before sitting down, and neither party takes his place till he has exhausted all the resources of ceremony and good education.

Scarcely are you seated before the servants bring the tea, in little porcelain cups ranged on a tea-board of varnished wood. Among rich people, tea-pots are not used, but the quantity of tea required is put into the cup, and the boiling water poured upon it. The infusion is highly scented, but is taken without sugar. The master of the house approaches the most important of his guests, saying, as he touches the tea-board, *Tsing-tcha,* "I invite you to take tea," and then every one advances to take his cup. The master takes one in both hands, and presents it to the most distinguished guest, who receives it also with both hands. The rest of the company take their cups, and drink together, though inviting each other by gestures to drink first. When every one is served, the visitors, holding their cups in both hands, bow to the ground, taking care not to spill the smallest drop of the tea, which would be very indecorous; and to lessen the liability to such an accident the cups are only half filled. The most elegant manner of serving tea is to give with it a little dried sweetmeat and a small spoon used only for this purpose. The guests drink their tea at many sips, and very slowly, though all together, in order to be ready at the same moment to put down their cups. However hot it may be, you must not exhibit any annoyance, but politely burn their throat or your fingers.

When the weather is very warm, the master of the house, as soon as the tea is drunk, takes his fan and holding it in both hands, bows to the company, as if to say, *Tsing-chen,* "I invite you to make use of your fans." Every one accordingly takes his fan; and it would be exceedingly rude not to bring one with you, as you would then prevent others from using theirs.

The conversation must always begin on indifferent, and mostly insignificant subjects, and this is, perhaps, the most difficult part of the ceremonial. In China you generally have to pass about two

hours in saying nothing, and then at the end of the visit, you explain in three words what really brings you there.

The visitor rises and says, "I have been troublesome to you a very long time;" and, doubtless, of all Chinese compliments, this is the one that most frequently approaches the truth.

Before leaving the room, you bow in the same manner as on entering it, the master keeping to the left and a little behind, and following as far as the horse or the palanquin. Before mounting, the stranger entreats the master to leave him, that he may not be guilty of so great a disrespect as turning his back, but the other contents himself with turning half round, that he may not see him mount. When the visitor is seated on his horse, or that his bearers have raised the poles of his palanquin, the *tsing-leao*, or adieu, is exchanged, and this is the last civility.

Such is the almost invariable order observed in visits between people of equal condition, though of course it is liable to modification, according to particular circumstances, such as the rank, the age, the occupation, the amount of personal distinction, &c. A volume might be written to describe all the variations, and it may easily be supposed that in China such books have not been wanting. On the whole, however, it is easier to be polite in China than elsewhere, as politeness is subject to more fixed regulations, and every one knows what he has to do in any given situation. It is, of course, a great restraint, but still it has its advantages.

The degree of etiquette that we had adopted, in conformity to the advice of the viceroy, prescribed to our visitors to send in advance a card of large dimensions, and when they came, to present themselves in full dress. By this means, we were enabled to avoid many troublesome visits, without exposing ourselves to the charge of rudeness. We regretted, however, to find that this plan kept away the Christians, whom our Mandarins took care not to inform previously of the conditions required, in order to be received.

We explained to Master Ting how glad we should be to see the worshippers of the Lord of Heaven, and we begged him to use his good offices to bring us together; but as we had no great reliance on his wish to oblige us, we endeavoured to adopt, on our own parts, some more effectual means.

The night that we passed at Tchoung-king was marked by an incident so strange and fantastic, that the narration of it might very well pass for a ghost story. We declare, therefore, beforehand, that it is not a fiction, and that we were not the victims of any hallucination. We were in bed, and sound asleep when we seemed to hear, as if in a dream, a measured and sonorous sound

moving at intervals through the courts, the gardens and the different apartments of the Communal Palace. The sound seemed sometimes far off, and sometimes in our own room. We thought we could distinguish a slight crackling of the bamboo mats, as by the steps of some one walking cautiously, so as not to be heard; sometimes we seemed to be in a strong light, then again in profound darkness; a voice that was turned towards our ear articulated some words that we could not make out and then the peculiar measured sound moved away, to approach us again after a time. We were still quite asleep, but with something of the oppressive feeling of a nightmare, for, notwithstanding all our efforts, we could not either open our eyes or utter a word. At length we felt something like a blow on the shoulder, and afterwards a violent shock, that awakened us at once with a start, and we found ourselves surrounded by a dazzling light, and saw opposite us a hideous face that began to laugh, and showed us its long and yellow teeth. The spectre stretched out a naked withered arm, and presented us with a grave air, a paper, on which were written European characters.

We drew back instinctively, and not knowing very well where we were. The spectre began to laugh again, drew back his arm, took in his left hand the torch he had been holding in his right, and made the sign of the Cross. And, now that our eyes had become capable of distinguishing objects a little more clearly, we saw that we had to do with a real living Chinese, very ugly, strangely attired, and naked to the waist.

When he saw that we were awake, he bowed towards us, and said in a low voice, that he was a Christian, and that he had brought us a letter from Monseigneur de Sinite, coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic for the province of Sse-tchouen. He then lit a lamp that stood on a little table by the side of the bed; we opened the letter that had reached us in so curious and phantasmagorical a manner, and whilst we read, our Christian retired, and began again to pace the apartments of the Communal Palace, striking the floor from time to time with a piece of bamboo. This man, it appeared, filled the office of night watchman.

Monseigneur Desfleches, Bishop of Sinite, whom we had known at Macao, in 1839, had his residence in the town of Tchoung-king. After having expressed his regret at not being able to quit the retreat in which he was hidden, to pay a visit to his countrymen, he entered into some details concerning the persecutions that the Christians were still suffering, notwithstanding the edicts of religious liberty obtained by the French Ambassador. His lord-

ship pointed out to us, that in the town of the third order, called Tchang-cheou, in which we were to pass some days, the first magistrate had just sent three Christians to prison ; and he gave us all the information necessary to claim their release, when we should have arrived in the town.

The Christian who had brought us the letter had taken care to deposit some paper, a Chinese pen and an inkstand on the table by the bedside, and we replied immediately to the communication of Monseigneur Desfleches, assuring him that we would do all that depended on us to obtain the release of his dear prisoners. We profited at the same time by this opportunity, to beg him to warn the Christians, who might wish to visit us at the Communal Palace, of the necessity of conforming to the regulations of "the rites."

We wrote this letter under a feeling of the deepest dejection. A missionary — a Frenchman, one whom we had known, and had not seen for so long — was here, almost close to us, yet we could not join him, embrace him, nor converse with him on any of those topics that thrill the soul of the missionary, such as the sufferings of the Christians, the trials of those who preach the Gospel, nor of our country, that France, from which we had had no news for three years. So sweet a consolation was denied us, and we were reduced merely to writing a few lines to him in haste and secrecy in the middle of the night.

In the life of the missionary, hunger, thirst, the inclemencies of the seasons, all the tortures of the body, are as nothing in comparison with these moral sufferings, these privations of the heart, to which it is so difficult to accustom oneself. While we were thus carrying on this singular and contraband correspondence, our cunning Christian continued his rounds through the different quarters of the Communal Palace, not forgetting from time to time to strike with his bamboo instrument the various watches of the night. When we had finished the letter, he concealed it carefully in the folds of his girdle, and tranquilly resumed his march.

The Chinese have in all circumstances, an inexhaustible store of tricks and artifices at their disposal, and the Christians of Tchoung-king, wishing to convey to us secretly M. Desfleches' letter, had contrived to introduce one of their number into the Palace. A poor artisan, an unlikely person to excite any suspicion, offered himself to the guardians in the quality of night watchman, taking care to ask much lower wages than are commonly given to the people who exercise this kind of industry. The offer was accepted to the great satisfaction of the Christians

of Tchoung-king, who were glad to be able to send us the letter, and perhaps at the same time not sorry to play the police a trick, for the Chinese are fully awake to this favourite amusement of old civilised nations.

Night watchmen are much in fashion in all the provinces of China; they are especially regularly employed in the pagodas, the tribunals, and the hotels, and rich private persons have them also in their service. These men are obliged to walk all night in the places confided to their vigilance, and to make a noise by striking at intervals on a tam-tam or an instrument of bamboo. The purpose of this noise is politely to intimate to the thieves that people are on their guard, and that consequently the moment is not favourable for breaking open doors or through walls. In some towns the Government also maintains watchmen organised as a patrol to traverse the streets, maintain public tranquillity, and give notice in case of fire. They stop for a moment in each quarter, and after having struck three times on their bronze tam-tams, they cry in unison *Lou-chan lou-hia — siao-sin-ho*, that is to say, "Beware of fire on the ground-floor — beware of fire on the upper-floor."

Fires are very frequent in China, especially in the southern provinces, where the houses are mostly built of wood. The practice of smoking continually too, and of having fire almost always in readiness for making tea, must be the cause of many accidents; indeed, when you have lived some time among them, and seen how careless the Chinese are, and what a disorderly state their houses are in, you are surprised that fires do not happen oftener.

The first thing they dread when fire does break out, however, is, not the fire but the thieves, who come running in from all quarters, under the pretence of extinguishing the fire, but really to increase the confusion, forcing themselves in everywhere, and carrying off whatever they can lay hands on, as if to snatch it from the flames. It is a regular pillage, and what people are most anxious about whose house is on fire, is to prevent the public from coming to their assistance. They hasten to move away their goods as fast as they can, and the neighbours are obliged to do the same, for the plunderers have the ready pretext of stopping the progress of the fire, for dismantling the houses, and appropriating even the very building materials, when they can get nothing else,—a small profit is better than none. It may easily be imagined what a fire is with such helps as these; a few hours are generally sufficient for the disappearance of two or three hundred houses.

In many towns, however, the administration does show some

anxiety to stop these abominable attempts. They maintain, as we have said, a patrol in the streets to give warning. They have large tubs standing filled with water, and there even exists in some places a more or less well organised body of firemen.

The moment a fire is perceived to have broken out, it is the duty of the Mandarins to repair to the spot, with this troop and the agents of police, in order to drive away the populace, who seem always disposed by instinct to become transformed into a band of robbers. The Chinese fire-engines are constructed very much like our own, but they bear the name of "Aquatic, or Marine Dragon," —*loung* or *yang loung*.

The word *yang loung* might, perhaps, be more correctly translated European Dragon, which would tend to show that they are of European importation, and that the Chinese can sometimes be prevailed on to adopt the customs of foreign countries.

One thing that always excited our admiration was the surprising activity with which the Chinese begin to rebuild their houses after they have been burnt down. Scarcely have the firemen disappeared, than the masons and carpenters take possession of the still smoking ground. They are not, however, usually the same proprietors who rebuild houses ; these are mostly ruined, and vanish, going wherever they can ; but such is the eagerness for trade and speculation in this country, that, while the flames are still devouring the houses, a crowd of purchasers present themselves to buy the ground, and build new ones ; and the contract of sale is drawn up almost by the light of the fire.

Immediately the ground is cleared, as if by enchantment, and it is usual to carry the rubbish to the spot where the fire first broke out, and heap it up there, throwing the expense of clearing it off upon the person whom the law supposes guilty of negligence, and therefore ordains this practice as his punishment. You frequently see in the interior of towns great heaps of ruins that have no other origin than this.

We left Tchoung-king rather late on the following morning, to go and pass the day at the neighbouring town. We had only to cross the Blue River, though it was possible that its very rapid current might present some difficulties; but we arrived quite safely at the other side, and Master Ting did not fail to claim all the merit of the success. He had made choice, he said, of a boat of the most perfect construction, and boatmen of tried intelligence ; moreover, he had repeated litanies to Kao-wang all the time he was smoking his opium ; and Kao-wang, in return, had commanded the river to carry us quietly over.

Our little adventure at Kien-tcheou had, it seems, made some noise, and the Mandarins, seeing that we were not inclined to favour their manœuvres at our own expense, thought proper to submit. As soon as we got to Tchoung-king, we could perceive the good effects of our firmness. We found the Communal Palace completely ready, and in full trim, and every one endeavouring to make themselves agreeable; so that, of course, we did what we could to reward this friendly attention, by taking ourselves away again as quickly as possible.

The authorities here added to our escort a military Mandarin and eight soldiers; and they did not fail to inform the people in the town that they did so in order to increase the grandeur of our appearance, or, as they say in China, "to display the character of haughty majesty."

We thanked the Prefect for his courtesy, and left him all the merit of his pretended generosity, though we knew that the measure had really been ordered by the viceroy on account of the gang of thieves that infest the road we were about to traverse, as far as the boundaries of the province. The new Mandarin was one of the heroes of the famous expedition sent to Canton against the English in 1842; but, although he had been engaged in the war against the "Western Devils," his appearance was not very warlike. He had a loose, shambling gait, a face that looked as if it were made of *papier maché*, and a mouth always foolishly half open. As there was, too, a considerable amount of self-importance in his manners, we had some suspicion that we should not get on very well together. From our very first interview, on the strength of having, during his stay at Canton, often taken a walk before the European factories, he gave himself such airs of familiarity, that we were obliged to recall him to the observance of the Rites.

After leaving the banks of the Blue River, we arrived at *Tchang-cheou-hien*, a town of the third order. This was where the three Christians of whom M. Desfleches had spoken were imprisoned. As soon as we were installed in the Communal Palace, the Prefect of the town came with all his staff to pay us a visit according to the established rules. We received him with all possible solemnity, in presence of our Mandarin conductors; and when we had exhausted the common-places of conversational etiquette, we inquired whether there were many Christians in the district. "They are very numerous," he replied.

"Are they worthy people — endeavouring to improve their hearts and to live according to the precepts of Christian virtue?"

— "How can the people be otherwise than good who follow your holy doctrine?" — "You are right; those who follow faithfully the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven cannot fail to be virtuous men. Your great Emperor, in an edict that he addressed to all the tribunals, has proclaimed that the Christian religion has no other object than to teach men to fly from what is evil and to practise what is good. He permits his subjects, therefore, throughout the extent of the empire to follow this religion; and he forbids all Mandarins, great or small, to seek after or persecute the Christians. Doubtless, the Imperial edict has reached the town, and you are acquainted with it?" — "The will of the Emperor is like the heat and light of the sun, — it penetrates everywhere; it has reached even this poor town."

"So we supposed; but the common people, in their moments of idleness, like to invent silly stories, quite without reason; and they pretend, that in the tribunal of Tchang-cheou-hien, you pay no respect to the Imperial will. Foolish tongues have even gone so far as to say that three Christians of the town of Tchang-cheou-hien have been arrested within these few days, and are now shut up in your tribunal. What are we to think of these rumours?" — "That they are idle and false. The people of these countries are given to lying, and one must pay no attention to what they say. It is well known that the Christians are most virtuous men. Who, then, should dare to put them in prison, especially after the edict that the Emperor has issued?"

"It is indeed difficult to believe that a man like you could be guilty of such a rash action."

"The wise listen to the talk of the multitude, but they know how to discern truth from falsehood."

After this aphorism, we returned to the common-places again, to the great satisfaction of the Prefect, who was, doubtless, pluming himself in his own mind on having so completely mystified us. He retired quite in a state of self-glorification, distributing majestic salutes to the company, and strutting and swelling like a turkey-cock.

As soon as he had left the palace, we said to Master Ting, "Now take a pencil, and write." We dictated to him the names, the ages, and professions of the three Christians who were lying in prison; and we then begged him to go immediately to the tribunal, and present this paper to the Prefect, telling him at the same time that the three men thus indicated were now shut up in his prisons: that he had just now been lying most impudently; but that we had been willing to spare him, and not put him to

shame before the public—since the authority of a magistrate has always need to be surrounded with honour.

The Prefect's tribunal was quite close to the Communal Palace, and as soon as Master Ting arrived, we heard the sound of the tam-tam, and the clamour made according to custom by the satellites as the judge takes his seat to administer justice. Almost immediately afterwards the three Christians, restored to liberty, came to pay their respects to us, and express their gratitude, and the Prefect's scribe was commissioned at the same time to inform us that his master had been wholly ignorant of their imprisonment; that the fault lay entirely with a subaltern officer, an audacious man, and ignorant of the law, who had already before committed similar mistakes, and whom he would not fail to punish. According to the law of Chinese politeness, we were obliged to listen to these new lies as if they were indisputable truths.

The immediate motive for imprisoning these Christians was, that they had refused to conform to certain superstitious practices of the Chinese in times of drought, the object of which is to obtain rain from the Dragon of Water. When these droughts are prolonged, and occasion any fears for the harvest, it is customary for the Mandarin of the district to make a proclamation, prescribing the most rigorous abstinence. Neither fermented liquors, meat of any kind, fish, eggs, or animal food of any description is allowable; nothing is to be eaten but vegetables. Every housekeeper has to fasten over his door strips of yellow paper, on which are printed some formulas of invocation, and the image of the Dragon of Rain. If heaven is deaf to this kind of supplication, collections are made, and scaffolds erected, for the performance of superstitious dramas; and, as a last resource, they organise a burlesque and extravagant procession, in which an immense dragon, made of wood or paper, is carried about to the sound of infernal music.

Sometimes it happens that, do what they will, the dragon is obstinate, and will not give rain, and then the prayers are changed into curses; he who was before surrounded with honours is insulted, reviled, and torn to pieces by his rebellious worshippers.

It is related that under Kia-king, fifth Emperor of the Mantchoo-Tartar dynasty, a long drought had desolated several provinces of the North; but as, notwithstanding numerous processions, the dragon persisted in not sending rain, the indignant Emperor launched against him a thundering edict, and condemned him to perpetual exile on the borders of the river Ili, in the province of Torgot. The sentence was about to be executed, and the criminal

was proceeding with touching resignation to cross the deserts of Tartary and undergo his punishment on the frontiers of Turkestan, when the supreme courts of Pekin, touched with compassion, went in a body to throw themselves at the feet of the Emperor, and ask pardon for the poor devil.

His Imperial Majesty then deigned to revoke the sentence, and a courier was sent off at full galop to carry the news to the executors of the Imperial decree. The dragon was reinstated in his functions, but only on condition that in future he would acquit himself of them a little better. Do the Chinese of our days, it will be asked, really put faith in such monstrous practices? Not the least in the world. All this is merely an external and completely lying demonstration. The inhabitants of the Celestial Empire observe these ancient superstitions without at all believing in them. What was done in times past, they continue to do in the present day, but solely because their ancestors did so, and what their ancestors have established they are always unwilling to change.

CHAP VI.

Bad and dangerous Road.—Leang-chan, a town of the Third Order.—Disputes between our Conductors and the Mandarins of Leang-chan. — A Day of Rest. — Numerous visits of Christians. — A Military Mandarin of our Escort compromises Himself. — He is Excluded from our Table. — Great Trial presided over by the Missionaries. — Details of this singular Trial. — Acquittal of a Christian, and Condemnation of a Mandarin. — Triumphal departure from Leang-chan. — Servitude and Abject state of Women in China. — Their Restoration by Christianity. — Master Ting declares that Women have no Souls. — Influence of women in the Conversion of Nations. — Arrival at Yao-tchang. — Hotel of the Beatitudes. — Lodgings in a Theatre. — Navigation of the Blue River. — Plays and Players in China.

On leaving Tchang-cheou-hien we remarked that the bearers were taller, more vigorous, and more agile than usual; and they carried us away with an ease and rapidity that were perfectly astonishing. Master Ting told us, as he passed by, that these were men selected on purpose, as the road was likely to be toilsome and dangerous.

We were not, in fact, long before we entered a mountainous district, intersected by deep ravines, where the roads were nothing more than narrow sloping paths cut in the clay, and moistened by an abundant rain, that had fallen incessantly during the previous night. We would much rather have proceeded on foot; but it

would have been impossible for us long to maintain our equilibrium on this slippery ground.

We were assured that of the two, there was less danger in remaining in the palanquins.

The bearers, being in the habit of passing along these miserable roads, begged us to trust in the steadiness of their legs, and we did confide a little in them, and much in Providence.

These poor bearers advanced, supporting themselves as well as they could on an iron-pointed staff, which they stuck from time to time into the clay; but although of course this manœuvre was of a nature to slacken their march, they proceeded, nevertheless, with such rapidity as to make us fairly giddy. Now and then they involuntarily made some odd capers, and the palanquin rocked from side to side in a very undecided manner, and appeared to be slipping from their shoulders. At those moments our position was by no means a pleasant one, for we ran imminent risk of rolling to the bottom of the ravine, and breaking our limbs against the enormous flint stones.

When we quitted these horrible paths, it was only to climb steep and very slippery hills, which were equally difficult in the ascent or descent. But in these circumstances there was not the same danger; and a fall could have no farther ill consequence than that of retarding our progress. To obviate this inconvenience, however, two long ropes were attached to the palanquin, to which about a dozen persons were harnessed, who thus helped to draw it forward; and when it was necessary to descend, the ropes were placed in an opposite direction, in order to moderate the speed of the bearers.

This strange team was recruited all along the road in a manner somewhat tyrannical it must be owned, but conformable to the customs of the country. When the attendants of the escort perceived any wood-cutters in the forest, or labourers in the fields, they ran to them, and summoned them, in the name of the law, to come and give their assistance for five *li*. It was curious to see the various stratagems put in practice in this chace, which to us was of so new a kind. When the fugitives found themselves circumvented by the knowing and skilful evolutions of the Mandarin's people, they often surrendered at discretion, and came laughing to submit to this unprofitable labour. We were at first distressed to see these poor villagers snatched thus from their necessary work, and compelled to give us, gratuitously, the use of their legs and arms; but we were obliged to leave all these things to be settled according to the custom of the country, for we were

by no means called upon as we went along to reform the abuses that we might happen to meet with in the Celestial Empire.

By God's help we passed in safety through all the dangers of the road; but we arrived at Leang-chou-hien quite worn out with fatigue; for, though we had had much less physical suffering than our bearers, we had had more of the mental kind. Though we had not taken a hundred steps, our limbs were to the last degree weary. The constraint we had had to impose on ourselves, and the efforts we were obliged to make, to maintain perfect immobility in our palanquins, and avoid giving them the least shake, produced all the effect of a forced march. As soon as ever we reached the Communal Palace, therefore, we hastened to get a little rest, leaving Master Ting to say to the visitors that we were not at home.

Our Mandarins and the people of our escort, who probably were not so tired as we were, never left off making a most abominable noise with the guardians of the Palace. During the whole night we had the pleasure of hearing them quarrelling, though what about we could not exactly discover; all that appeared clear was, that it was a question of gain and loss, of trickery and fraud. By the time it was daylight again, our servant came to explain to us all the details of these very *Chinese* doings. Our conductors, it appeared, had, at the instigation of the new military Mandarin whom we had taken at Tchoung-king, attempted to make the tribunals of Leang-chan pay a more considerable sum for the expenses of our journey than they were really bound to furnish. In order to support their pretensions in the most effectual manner, they had even not shrunk from falsifying the orders signed by the viceroy; but, unfortunately for their little speculation, the Mandarins of Leang-chan had already been furnished with a copy, so that it was easy for them to ascertain the fraud. This was the origin of the interminable quarrels we had heard, and since the night was not, it appeared, long enough to settle them, the morning dawn found them still disputing with the same fury as before. Master Ting endeavoured to get us into the quarrel, and had represented us to the Mandarins of the place as most terrible fellows; but the affair did not concern us, and we took care not to meddle in it. We merely exhorted them to come to an agreement as well as they could, and as quickly as they could, for we certainly did not intend to set out in the hottest part of the day.

When at last they had exhausted all the tricks and stratagems of Chinese polemics, peace was concluded; on what conditions we were not informed; but that did not matter to us. Towards

eleven o'clock they came to inform us, with an air of triumph, that at last we were going to set off; but we replied it was too late, and we would not go till the next day. "We have certainly," we added, "no right to prevent you from quarrelling; but neither have you any right to make us the victims of your disputes, by forcing us to travel during the greatest heat." The people of our escort understood immediately that there was no help for it; and that we should not change our resolution; but it was not so with the Mandarins of Leang-chan, who could not make up their minds to it till after they had exhausted all the resources of Chinese diplomacy. The military commandant tried to seduce us with a jar of fine old wine, which he accompanied with most touching and fraternal exhortations. We tasted the wine, which we found delicious; but we declared our conviction that we could nowhere drink it in such good company as at Leang-chan.

As soon as it became known that we were not going to set off that day, the Communal Palace was invaded by a crowd of traders, who came to offer us the curiosities of the country. What we found most remarkable in these displays of Chinese merchandise were the blinds or awnings often used in these warm countries to fix over the doors and windows. They are made of little sticks of bamboo, joined together with silk cord, and ornamented with paintings of flowers, birds, and fanciful patterns. The beautiful varnish that covers them heightens the brilliancy of the colours, and renders this light trellis-work extremely gay and pretty. There are also in this town a great variety of odoriferous necklaces for sale.

The Christians are numerous enough at Leang-chan, and we were astonished that none of them had yet showed themselves. We could not help thinking that the Mandarins of the place had forbidden them to enter, in order to be a little revenged upon us for our refractoriness. As we were walking in the outer court, however, we noticed among the crowd at the door, a man who made the sign of the Cross; and we walked straight up to him, and invited him to follow us into the hall of reception. The long military Mandarin who had accompanied us from Tchoung-king, endeavoured to make us send him back; but he was entreated to moderate a zeal so untimely and so little to our taste. After having listened with the most lively interest to the details that this Christian entered into concerning the state of the mission, we begged him to give his brethren notice of the necessity of presenting themselves with a visiting note, and a dress of ceremony. We also went ourselves to give notice to the porter, and, the news being

soon spread abroad among the Christians, our visitors shortly afterwards began to arrive in numerous detachments. How can we express the ineffable delight that these meetings afforded us? These men were all unknown to us, yet they were brothers and friends. We felt as it were a Christian magnetism, a current of fraternity passing from them to us and from us to them. We loved without having ever seen each other, for we had one faith and one hope. We had so long been wanderers among indifferent or hostile people, that the sympathy by which we were now surrounded, even though it was a little Chinese in its expression, expanded our hearts, and filled them with sweet emotions. It seemed while we were conversing with Christians, that we were but a little way from France. The Mandarins were quite surprised at these spontaneous intimacies, and the friendship which it seemed to them must be of long standing. They looked puzzled and uneasy, and it was evident they were obliged to exercise some self-command to restrain their ill-humour. An incident very unimportant in itself, a mere trifle, was near making their anger burst forth, and might have led to more serious consequences.

Just before nightfall, as we were repeating our breviary while walking in an avenue of the garden, and the three Mandarins of our escort were smoking their pipes under a large oleander and enjoying the delicious fragrance of the evening, our servant crossed the garden with a letter and small packet and took the way towards our room. The military Mandarin whom we had taken at Tchoung-king immediately followed him, and though he had chosen his time well, we did nevertheless perceive his move, and ran to our room to see what the audacious spy was doing. We caught him *in flagrante delicto*, reading our letter and rummaging in the parcel addressed to us. As soon as he saw us he tried to bolt, keeping possession of the parcel; but we barred his passage, drove him back into the room, shut the door, and sprang upon him crying "Thieves! Thieves!" When he saw that we took hold of a rope as if to tie him, he cried out in his turn for help, and all the inmates of the palace in a moment came running to our room.

We had no inclination to do anything more than laugh at the adventure; but in China it was necessary to go into a violent passion, and accordingly we did so.

The packet, which was open, contained only some dried fruits and perfumed necklaces, which a Christian family had the kindness to offer us. The letter had nothing in it which could compromise them, and was as follows:

"The humble family of the *Tchao* prostrate themselves to the earth before the Spiritual Fathers coming from the great kingdom of France, and beg them to call down the blessing of Heaven upon them. It is by the merciful will of God that they have obtained your precious presence in our poor and obscure country.

"Soon rivers and mountains will separate us, but the sentiments of the heart can traverse infinite spaces in a moment. Day and night we will think of our Spiritual Fathers.

"At Leang-chan all the friends of religion* unite to pray to the Lord of Heaven for them, and to beg him to grant them perpetual peace for their souls and bodies. We raise towards you some fruits of our country. Deign to lower your hands to receive them. This little offering is that of our hearts. These characters have been traced by the sinful men and women of the family of Tchao."

The zealous military Mandarin, confused at not having discovered any kind of plot, trembled in every limb at the expression of our pretended anger. The Prefect of the town arrived with his staff to restore peace, but he took such a wrong way to obtain it that he produced precisely the opposite result. He was stupid enough to tell us that he had ordered the head of the family of Tchao, as the original cause of the disturbance, to be imprisoned.

"A trial! a trial!" we exclaimed; "we must have a trial! If the head of the family of Tchao has committed any offence, let him be punished according to the laws for an example to the people. But if the head of that family is innocent, then it is the military Mandarin of Tchoung-king who is the guilty party, and he must be punished. The peace has been broken in the Communal Palace; we, who travel under the safe conduct of the Emperor, have been insulted by one of his officers; order must be restored, and every one be put in his proper place—good or bad, according to his conduct."

The Prefect of Leang-chan, who did not well understand what we would be at, tried to persuade us that the affair might be considered as terminated—that no more need be said about it—that the head of the family of Tchao was pardoned and about to be set at liberty, and that consequently "all the emotions of our souls might be tranquillised." But to all his exhortations and those of his colleagues we replied always in the same words, "A trial! a trial! If the head of the family of Tchao is innocent, he has no need of pardon; his conduct must be investigated; he has

* "*Kiao-you.*" The Chinese Christians call themselves by this name.

been ill-treated in the eyes of the world. Our honour and that of all Christians is concerned. There must be a public trial in order that the principles of justice and equity may be explained to the people with clearness and method. Those who know us," we added, turning to the Prefect, "know that we are not men of light words and unsteady resolutions, and we here declare that we will not leave Leang-chan till there has been a public trial, at which we will be present. It is already late, but orders can be given directly to make the necessary preparations." Addressing ourselves afterwards to Master Ting, we told him, that as it was supper time we must sit down to table, and in order not to prolong the discussion, and to induce every one to go about his business, we made the Prefect a low bow, and retired to walk in a little solitary garden that was situated behind our own room.

Some few minutes afterwards all the curious people, whom the adventure of the dried fruits had attracted to the Communal Palace had disappeared, and it was announced to us that the warm wine was on the table. As we entered the room where the supper was served, we remarked that the Mandarin Tchoung-king was at his post amongst the rest of our fellow-commoners, and we made him a sign to go out, declaring that henceforth it would be impossible for us to take our meals in his company. He thought proper at first to affect to take this for a joke; but we soon made him understand that we were perfectly serious, and, by the persuasion of his colleagues, he at length withdrew, though with a very bad grace, and went to eat his rice elsewhere.

Our supper, as may be imagined, was not remarkably gay. The company helped themselves from the dishes right and left, but all in perfect silence; the chop-sticks seized and let fall often the same morsel before carrying it off. The guests swallowed, as if in mere absence of mind, several little glasses of warm wine; they glanced at each other out of the corners of their eyes, but said nothing. Every one seemed to be thinking of this grand trial. It occurred to us now and then that we had gone on rather too boldly, and that if there had been at Leang-chan a Prefect of a little energy of character it would have been prudent to think of an honourable retreat. But fortunately we had to do with a fearful man, of a soft nature, whom we were very sure of being able to bend. It was of importance, therefore, to march on without hesitation, and we were also glad to profit by this opportunity to encourage and raise the spirits of the Christians, whom the disappointment of their hopes of religious liberty had greatly dejected.

As there was not much time wasted in conversation, we had

soon arrived at the end of the repast, tea and pipes were brought, and then it was found necessary to relax a little from perfect dumbness, since, the occupation not being of so active a nature as dinner, there was no longer the same pretext for keeping silence. We therefore plunged immediately, and without preamble, into the business that was occupying every one's thoughts — that is to say, the proposed trial.

We were the first to speak. "We presume," said we, "that by this time everything is in readiness for the trial that is to take place this evening. Has the hour been fixed yet?"

"Yes, certainly," replied Master Ting; "everything shall be arranged according to your desire. The Prefect has undertaken it, and he is renowned for his skill in discussing the most difficult points of law. All will be well, make yourself easy; you cannot, however, be present at the trial; the laws of the Empire are opposed to it. But that is no matter."

"On the contrary, it matters very much; mind, we warn you that if the trial takes place without our being present, it will count for nothing."

After a long and stormy discussion, we found ourselves no nearer the point at issue. The emissaries of the tribunal went and came incessantly, but without bringing us any solution of the problem. But as we had no wish to pass the night in parleying, we told Master Ting that he might undertake to negotiate on the following basis:—If at ten o'clock in the evening the trial had not commenced, we should go to bed, and then we should certainly remain the next day at Leang-chan; if the affair were not decided the next day, we should remain till the day after, and so on indefinitely, for we were firmly determined not to leave the place till after the trial.

Furnished thus with his instructions, Master Ting betook himself to the Tribunal. Ten o'clock arrived, and we went to bed and slept profoundly, though on the eve of a grand battle!

Towards midnight, we were awakened from our sleep to receive a deputation from the first magistrate, informing us that all was arranged, and in readiness for the trial, and that they were awaiting us at the Tribunal. The hour did not appear to us particularly convenient; but, considering that the Mandarins had had a good deal to get over on their side, we thought we could do no less than make some concessions on ours. We rose therefore immediately, and after having put on the finest clothes we had, we repaired to the tribunal in a palanquin, and escorted by

numerous attendants bearing in their hands torches of resinous wood.

We knew what a Chinese trial was. What we had undergone at Lha-ssa and Tching-tou-fou had served to make us acquainted with the form of procedure ; and we had traced out for ourselves, in accordance with these recollections, a nice little plan, which it was only necessary to carry out with steadiness.

We were introduced into the hall of audience, which was splendidly lit with large lanterns of variously coloured paper. A multitude of curious spectators, amongst whom were probably many Christians, thronged the lower end of the hall. The principal Mandarins of the town and our three conductors were seated at the upper part on a raised platform, where were several seats arranged before a long table. The judges gave us a most gracious reception, and the Prefect begged us to be seated immediately, in order that they might commence proceedings. The question now arose, *where* were we to be seated? Nobody knew, and our presence appeared to create in the mind of the Prefect himself some serious doubts on the subject of his prerogatives. He certainly bore an Imperial dragon, richly embroidered in relief on the front of his violet silk tunic, but then we had a dragon on a beautiful red girdle: the Prefect had a blue ball; but then we had a yellow cap!

After a few moments of hesitation we felt a sudden energetic inspiration to assume the direction of the affair ourselves, and, accordingly, we marched proudly up to the President's seat, and coolly motioned the others to the places they were to occupy, each according to his dignity. There was a movement of surprise, and even of hilarity among the Mandarins, but no opposition. They seemed so taken by surprise as to be completely put out, and mechanically assumed the places indicated.

The sitting was then commenced. We placed before us on the table the *corpus delicti* — that is to say, the letter and the little parcel. After having read and commented on the letter, we passed it to the military Mandarin of Tchoung-king, who was in the last place on the right hand, and asked him whether that was the letter he had opened. The reply was in the affirmative. We then passed on the parcel with the necklaces perfumed with cloves and sandal wood. Its identity having been also confirmed, we desired an officer of the court, who wore a cap of black felt in the form of a sugar-loaf and ornamented with long pheasant's plumes, to present the letter and the parcel to each of the judges, that they might all examine them.

These preliminaries being over, the order was given to introduce the accused, and bring him to the bar, and we soon saw advancing between four ill-looking attendants a Chinese of elegant deportment and most intelligent countenance. A chaplet, at the end of which shone a large bright copper cross, was passed round his neck. Immediately on seeing him, we began to feel great hopes of success; it would have been very disagreeable and embarrassing to us to have to do with a timid stupid man, incapable of giving us any support in the singular position in which we had placed ourselves; but we could not have met with a more suitable person. The head of the Tchao family appeared expressly cut out for our purpose.

As soon as he had arrived at the bottom of the platform, he cast a rapid glance round the court, but one that was sufficient to enable him to perceive that he was to be judged by one who was not a Mandarin of the Celestial Empire. He prostrated himself smiling, and, after having saluted the president by striking the earth three times with his forehead, he rose to salute each judge with a low bow. When he had performed these salutations in the most graceful manner, he knelt down; for, according to the Chinese law, it is in this posture the accused have to appear before their judges. We begged him to rise, telling him we should be pained to see him on his knees before us, since that was not conformable to the customs of our country.

"Yes," said the Prefect, "stand upright, since you have been permitted to do so; and now," added he, "since the men from those distant countries will doubtless not understand your language, I will myself undertake your examination."

"No, no!" we said, "that cannot be; your fears are without foundation; you will see that we shall come to a very good understanding with this man."

"Yes," said the accused; "this language is for me whiteness and clearness itself. I understand it without a moment's hesitation."

"Since that is the case," said the Prefect, a little disconcerted, "you must reply with simplicity and uprightness of heart to the questions that will be addressed to you."

We proceeded then to the examination in the following form:—

"What is your name?"

"This quite little person* is called by the vile and despicable name of *Tchao;* the name that I received in baptism is Simon."

* The Chinese of the lower order always qualify themselves thus in the presence of Mandarins.

"What is your age, and where do you come from?"

"For eight and thirty years I have endured the miseries of life in the poor country of Leang-chan."

"Are you a Christian?"

"I, sinner as I am, have obtained the grace of knowing and adoring the Lord of Heaven."

"Look at this letter. Do you know it? By whom was it written?"

"I do know it. It is this quite little person who traced these awkward characters with his unskilful pencil."

"Examine this packet. Do you recognise that?"

"I do recognise it."

"To whom did you address this letter and this parcel?"

"To the Spiritual Fathers of the great kingdom of France."

"What was your purpose in sending these things?"

"The humble Tchao family wished to express to the Spiritual Fathers the sentiments of their filial piety."

"How can that be? We do not know you, and you do not know us. We have never seen you."

"That is true; but those who are of the same religion are never strangers to one another; they make but one family, and when Christians meet, their hearts easily comprehend each other."

"You see," said we to the Prefect, "that this man perfectly understands our language. He replies with the utmost clearness to all our questions; you know also now, that Christians only form one family; it is written in your books, and you yourselves often repeat, that all men are brothers,—that is to say, all men have the same origin; let them come from the North or the South, the East or the West, they have all proceeded from the same father and mother; the root is one, the branches are innumerable. This is what we must understand when it is said that all men are brothers, and that signifies also that there is but one sovereign Lord, who has created and governs all things. He is the great father and mother of the ten thousand nations who are on the face of the earth. The Christians alone adore this Sovereign Lord, this great Father and Mother, and that is why they are said to form among themselves but one family. Those who are not Christians belong also by their origin to the same family; but they live apart and forget the principles of paternal authority and filial piety."

"All that is founded in reason," said the Chinese judges. "Here is the true doctrine in all its purity."

After this short theological discussion, we returned to the trial.

"We ourselves," said we, addressing the accused, "are strangers, not born in the Central Empire, but we have lived in it long enough to become acquainted with the greater part of your laws. It may be, nevertheless, that some have escaped us. Answer, therefore, according to your conscience.

"In sending us this letter, and the packet of dried fruit, did you think that you were acting contrary to the laws?"

"I did not think so. On the contrary, I believed that I had done a good action, and that is what our laws do not forbid."

"As you are a man of the people, you may be mistaken in this, and not understand aright the laws of the Empire."

Addressing ourselves then to the magistrates who were seated near us, we asked them whether this man had committed a reprehensible action? All replied unanimously that his conduct was worthy of praise. "And you," we said to the Mandarin of Tchoung-king, named Lu, "what is your opinion?"

"There can be no doubt that the action of the Tchao family was virtuous and holy. Who would be absurd enough to say the contrary, and maintain that it was reprehensible?"

"The matter has now been made clear," said we to the accused; "the truth has been carefully separated from error. According to the testimony both of the superior and inferior Mandarins, you had a right to obey the dictates of your heart, and make the offering to us. In that case we accept it here openly, and in presence of every one; and we will preserve your letter with care as one of our most precious possessions."

The trial was now over, and we might immediately have pronounced a verdict of "not guilty," and sent home the accused in triumph; but as we had taken a fancy to playing the part of Mandarin, we prolonged the sitting a little. We requested the honourable Tchao to give us some information concerning the Christian community of Leang-chan; and in language that was full of spirit, though decorous, he entered into a number of details that were most interesting to us, though probably not quite as much so to the *other judges*. At length we ventured to ask this question, —"Are the Christians of Leang-chan faithful observers of the laws? Do they set a good example to the people?"

"We Christians," said Tchao, "are miserable sinners, like other men, but we do endeavour to act virtuously."

"Do so," said we; "exert yourselves to become virtuous, to make your conduct conformable to the purity and holiness of the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven, and you will see that the Mandarins and the people throughout the Empire will at last do you

justice. Already the Emperor has issued an edict declaring that the object of the Christian religion is to train men to the practice of what is good, and the avoidance of what is bad, and he has consequently forbidden either the great or the small tribunals of the eighteen provinces to persecute the Christians. This edict has not yet been promulgated in all localities, but its existence is authentic; you may announce it to all the friends of religion: you are permitted to say your prayers and observe all Christian ordinances without any fear, and in perfect liberty. Who would be audacious enough, by troubling you, to incur the anger of the Emperor."

After this little speech, we asked the Prefect if we might send back the head of the Tchao family to his home. "Since it is manifest," said we, "that his conduct has been in all respects virtuous, he ought now to be allowed to go and carry the consolation of his presence to his relations and friends."

The meeting was just about to disperse, but we extended our arms, and begged permission to express one more thought. "Since," said we, "the action of the Tchao family has been conformable to the laws and irreproachable, it is evident that the conduct of the Mandarin Lu has been culpable; he introduced himself secretly into our apartment, and has covered his face with shame, by opening a letter that was addressed to us.

"The Mandarin Lu was appointed to be our military escort from the town of Tchoung-king to the frontiers of the province; but, as you see clearly that he has not received a good education, and his ignorance of the rites may lead him into still greater faults, we here declare that we will have nothing more to do with him: our declaration shall be made in writing, and sent to the superior authorities of Tchoung-king." At these words we rose, and the sitting was over. Our admirable Christian came to us, threw himself on his knees, and asked our blessing. He also received the congratulations of the Mandarins, who had been present at these curious proceedings, and he well deserved them. It seemed to us, that by his dignified deportment, and the courageous propriety of his language, he had done honour to the name of Christian in the eyes of his countrymen. We felt, nevertheless, some anxiety concerning his future prospects, and the joy of our little triumph was somewhat abated by feelings of distrust. We feared that, after our departure, the Tribunal of Leang-chan, might seek to take its revenge on the Christians. We recommended to Simon Tchao therefore the utmost prudence, in order to afford no pretext to the malevolence of the Mandarins, and we begged him to send

us word how he was going on. A year afterwards we received at Macao a letter from Leang-chan, informing us that since our departure the Christians had enjoyed the most profound tranquillity, and no one had ventured to persecute the worshippers of the Lord of Heaven.

It was almost morning by the time we returned to the Communal Palace, but we went to bed, — not indeed to sleep — that would have been difficult, — but to rest ourselves a little, recover our composure, and prepare to set out in a few hours. We had need of some interval of rest, that our thoughts might return into their wonted channel, from which they had been so suddenly driven. We had hardly quitted the Tribunal, before all that had passed appeared like a dream. We could hardly conceive how the Mandarins and the people could have been in earnest in this extraordinary trial: the part of president of the court, played *impromptu* by a French missionary in a Chinese town, in the presence of Chinese magistrates, and that without any opposition, as if it had been the most natural thing in the world! Two strangers, two barbarians, to be allowed to master for a moment all the rooted prejudices of a people, jealous and disdainful of strangers to excess, and that even to the point of arrogating to themselves the authority of a judge, and exercising it officially! How could this be possible?

These facts prove, however, how much the principle of authority is usually respected by the Chinese people. Our red girdles had been our most powerful spell; they were influenced by them, without being very well aware of it, as by an emanation of the Imperial power.

The fear of compromising themselves is also a sentiment universal among the Chinese, and which one may easily turn to account. Every one thinks first of providing for his own safety, and then letting things take their course. Prudence, or perhaps it may be called pusillanimity, is one of the most remarkable qualities of the Chinese; and they have an expression, which they make use of on all occasions, which very well characterises this sentiment. In the midst of all difficulties and embarrassments, the Chinese say *siao-sin,* that is to say, "Lessen" or "draw in your heart." Those who are fond of comparing the characters of various nations, as they manifest themselves in their languages, might find a curious contrast in this respect between the French and the Chinese. At the approach of danger, while the latter says, trembling, "Draw in your heart," the former starts up, crying "*Prends garde.*" He makes use of an expression that

could only suit a warlike race, who, in presence of an enemy, instinctively lay the hand on the sword.

On our departure from Leang-chan, we were honoured with a magnificent ovation. The news of this strange nocturnal sitting of the First Tribunal, under the presidency of a "Devil of the West," had spread abroad, enriched, of course, by the imaginations of the narrators, with a number of most wonderful circumstances. As soon, therefore, as the sun appeared above the horizon, all the inhabitants of the town began to hurry eagerly to the spot that we should have to pass. All the Mandarins, in their robes of state, were assembled at the Communal Palace to bid us farewell, and to overwhelm us with the most extravagant compliments. They accompanied us into the street, and would not go back till they had seen their unlooked for colleagues of the preceding night properly installed in their palanquins. All the way we went along the crowd was immense, and animated by the most noisy and feverish eagerness to catch a glimpse of us — or, at least, of our yellow caps. Here and there were assembled groups of Christians, who, we saw with pleasure, were assuming a tolerably courageous deportment. All wore their chaplets round their necks, and when we came up to them, threw themselves on their knees, and begged our blessing in chorus, making as they did so, a bold sign of the cross. We did not perceive that this religious act excited among the Pagans the least inclination to hostility or mockery. They kept a respectful silence, or contented themselves with saying, "Here are Christians who are asking the masters of their religion to call down felicity from Heaven upon them."

In the last street, before we left the town, we saw a long line of women, who appeared also to be waiting the passing of the men with yellow caps and red girdles. When our palanquins came opposite them, after having tottered a few seconds on their little lame feet, they ended by kneeling down, and making also the sign of the cross. They were Christian women of Leang-chan, who under these circumstances, had judged it proper not to "draw in their hearts," but to shake off, at least for once, the hard yoke of servitude which Chinese prejudice imposes on their sex. The people of our escort seemed rather surprised at such an audacious demonstration, but we did not hear any improper remark. One of them cried on seeing the women kneel down, "Well, there are Christian *men*, that I have known a long time, but I never knew before there were Christian *women*;" to which his comrade responded, "Nobody ever thought you knew much about anything."

At length we got out of Leang-chan, a town of the third order, which will always hold a place in the numerous recollections of our long peregrinations. We forgot to say that when we left the Communal Palace, we found that the Mandarin of Tchoung-king was no longer among the number of our conductors. After dismissing him at the close of our judicial sitting, we never saw him again, and no one ever spoke to us of him; only at the moment of our departure, the Prefect informed us that Lu had been replaced by a young military Mandarin, whom he presented to us, and who, far from exposing himself to be brought to trial, always behaved in a very amiable and prepossessing manner. The above mentioned conduct of the Christian women of Leang-chan, was one of the things that struck us most during our journey through the province of Sse-tchouen. That women should collect in the street to see two persons pass, who were reputed curious and extraordinary, who, though said to be born in Europe, had traversed Tartary, Thibet, and China, there was nothing in that but what was quite natural. If these women were Christians, it was natural enough that they should kneel down, and cross themselves, and ask a blessing of a minister of their religion. All this would be simple enough in Europe, but in China it was something prodigious; it was a defiance to all custom, a running counter to the most established ideas and principles. Such prejudices arise from the lamentable state of oppression and slavery, to which women have always been reduced, among nations whose sentiments have not been ennobled and purified by Christianity.

The condition of the Chinese woman is most pitiable; suffering, privation, contempt, all kinds of misery and degradation, seize on her in the cradle, and accompany her pitilessly to the tomb. Her very birth is commonly regarded as a humiliation and a disgrace to the family—an evident sign of the malediction of Heaven. If she be not immediately suffocated (according to an atrocious custom which we shall speak of by and by), she is regarded and treated as a creature radically despicable, and scarcely belonging to the human race.

This appears so incontestable a fact, that *Pan-houi-pan*, celebrated, though a woman, among Chinese writers, endeavours, in her works, to humiliate her own sex, by reminding them continually of the inferior rank they occupy in the creation. "When a son is born," she says, "he sleeps upon a bed; he is clothed with robes, and plays with pearls; every one obeys his princely cries. But when a girl is born, she sleeps upon the ground, is merely wrapped up in a cloth, plays with a tile, and is incapable of acting

either virtuously or viciously. She has nothing to think of but preparing food, making wine, and not vexing her parents."

In ancient times, instead of rejoicing when a child was born—if it happened to be of the inferior sex — they left it for three whole days on a heap of rags on the ground, and the family did not manifest the slightest interest in so insignificant an event. When this time had expired, they performed carelessly some trivial ceremony, strikingly contrasting with the solemn rejoicings that took place on the birth of a male child. Pan-houi-pan refers to this ancient custom, and vaunts its propriety and wisdom, serving so well to prepare woman for the proper feeling of her inferiority.

This public and private servitude of women — a servitude that opinion, legislation, manners, have sealed with their triple seal — has become, in some measure, the corner-stone of Chinese society. The young girl lives shut up in the house where she was born, occupied exclusively with the cares of housekeeping, treated by everybody, and especially by her brothers, as a menial, from whom they have a right to demand the lowest and most painful services. The amusements and pleasures of her age are quite unknown to her; her whole education consists in knowing how to use her needle; she neither learns to read nor to write; there exists for her neither school nor house of education; she is condemned to vegetate in the most complete and absolute ignorance, and no one ever thinks of, or troubles himself about her, till the time arrives when she is to be married. Nay, the idea of her nullity is carried so far, that even in this, the most important and decisive event in the life of a woman, she passes for nothing; the consulting her in any way, or informing her of so much as of the name of her husband, would be considered as most superfluous and absurd.

The young girl is simply an object of traffic, an article of merchandise to be sold to the highest bidder, without her having the right to ask a single question concerning the merit or quality of her purchaser. On the day of the wedding there is great anxiety to adorn and beautify her. She is clad in splendid robes of silk, glittering with gold and jewels; her beautiful plaits of raven hair are ornamented with flowers and precious stones; she is carried away in great pomp, and musicians surround the brilliant palanquin, where she sits in state like a queen on her throne. You think, perhaps, on witnessing all this grandeur and rejoicing, that now, at last, her period of happiness is about to begin. But, alas! a young married woman is but a victim adorned for the sacrifice. She is quitting a home where, however neglected, she was in the

society of the relations to whom she had been accustomed from her infancy. She is now thrown, young, feeble, and inexperienced, among total strangers, to suffer privation and contempt, and be altogether at the mercy of her purchaser. In her new family, she is expected to obey every one without exception. According to the expression of an old Chinese writer, "the newly married wife should be but a shadow and an echo in the house." She has no right to take her meals with her husband; nay, not even with his male children: her duty is to serve them at table, to stand by in silence, help them to drink, and fill and light their pipes. She must eat alone, after they have done, and in a corner; her food is scanty and coarse, and she would not dare to touch even what is left by her own sons.

It may be thought, perhaps, that this does not agree very well with the much-talked-of principle of filial piety; but it must not be forgotten that in China a woman counts for nothing. The law ignores her existence, or notices her merely to load her with fetters, to complete her servitude, and confirm her legal incapacity. Her husband, or rather her lord and master, can strike her with impunity, starve her, sell her, or what is worse, let her out for a longer or shorter period, as is a common practice in the province of Tche-kiang.

Polygamy, which is allowable in China, aggravates the sufferings of the married woman. When she is no longer young, when she has no children, or none of the male sex, her husband takes a second wife, of whom she becomes in some measure the servant. The household is then the seat of continual war, full of jealousies, animosities, quarrels, and not unfrequently of battles. When they are alone, they have at least the liberty of weeping in secret over the cureless sorrows of their destiny.

The state of perpetual humiliation and wretchedness to which the women of China are reduced, does sometimes drive them to frightful extremities; and the judicial annals are full of the most tragical events arising from this cause. The number of women who hang themselves, or commit suicide in various ways, is very considerable. When this catastrophe occurs in a family, the husband shows usually a great deal of emotion, for, in fact, he has suffered a considerable loss, and will be under the necessity of buying another wife.

The hard condition of the poor Chinese women is, as will be supposed, considerably ameliorated in the Christian families. As it is remarked by Monseigneur Gerbet, "Christianity, which strikes at the very root of slavery, by its doctrine of the divine

fraternity of all men, combats in a special manner the slavery of women, by its dogma of the divine maternity of Mary. How should the daughters of Eve remain slaves from the fallen Adam, since the restored Eve, the new mother of all living, has become the Queen of Angels? When we enter those chapels of the Virgin to which devotion has given a special celebrity, we remark with pious interest the *ex voto* suspended there by the hand of a mother whose child has been cured — of a sailor saved from shipwreck by the patroness of mariners. But the eyes of reason and history see in the worship of Mary an ideal temple which Catholicism has constructed for all times and for all ages; an *ex voto* of a higher social and universal signification. Man had pressed with a brutal sceptre on the head of his companion for forty centuries; but he laid it down on the day when he knelt before the altar of Mary — he laid it down with gratitude; for the oppression of his wife had been his own degradation, and he was delivered then from his own tyranny." — (Monseigneur Gerbet, *Keepsake Religieuse.*)

The recovery of women in China from this abject state is going on slowly, it is true, but in a most striking and effectual manner. In the first place, it need hardly be said that the little girl born in a Christian family is not murdered, as is often the case among the Pagans. Religion is there to watch over her at her birth, to take her lovingly in its arms, and say, Here is a child created in the image of God, and predestined, like you, to immortality. Thank the Heavenly Father for having given her to you; and implore the Queen of Angels to be her patroness.

The young Christian girl is not permitted to stagnate in ignorance; she does not vegetate, forsaken by every one, in a corner of the paternal mansion; for since she must learn her prayers and study the Christian doctrine, it is necessary to renounce in her favour the most inveterate prejudices of her nation. Schools must be founded for her, where she may be enabled to develope her intellects, to learn in the books of her religion those mysterious characters which are for other Chinese women an inexplicable enigma. She will be in the society of numerous companions of her own age; and at the same time that her mind is becoming enlarged and her heart formed to virtue, she will learn in some measure in what consists the life of this world.

It is more especially by marriage contracted in the Christian form that the Chinese woman shakes off the frightful servitude of Pagan customs, and enters on the rights and privileges of the great family of humanity. Although the power of prejudice and

habit may not even yet always permit her to manifest her inclinations openly, and choose for herself him who is destined in this life to partake her joys and her sorrows, her wishes do nevertheless count for something; and we have ourselves, more than once, known instances of young girls who, by their energetic resistance, have induced their parents to break off engagements entered into without their participation. Such a fact would be regarded as absurd and impossible among the Pagans. The Christian women also always possess in their families the influence and the prerogatives of wives and mothers; and it may be observed that they enjoy greater liberty out of doors. The practice of assembling on Sundays and festival days at chapels and oratories to pray in common, and be present at the divine offices, creates and maintains relations of intimacy among them. They go out oftener to visit each other, and form from time to time those little social parties which are so useful in dissipating care and vexation, and in helping one to support the burden of life. Pagan women know nothing of these comforts and consolations; they are almost always secluded, and nobody cares if they wear out their souls in languor and *ennui*. Master Ting, in speaking with us concerning the Leang-chan demonstration, mentioned it as such an enormity, that it is evident what is the value of women in the estimation of the Chinese.

"As we were leaving Leang-chan," said he, "when we passed through that street where there were so many women assembled, I heard it said that they were Christians. Is'nt that nonsense?"

"No, certainly; it was the truth. They were Christians."

Master Ting looked stupified with astonishment, and his arms fell down by his side. "I don't understand that," said he. "I have heard you say that people become Christians to save their souls. Is that it?"

"Yes; that is the object we propose to ourselves."

"Then what can the women become Christians for?"

"What for? To save their souls, like the men."

"But they have no souls," said Master Ting, stepping back a pace, and folding his arms; "women have no souls. You can't make Christians of them."

We endeavoured to remove the scruples of the worthy man upon this point, and to give him some few sounder ideas on the subject of women's souls; but we are by no means sure we succeeded. The very notion tickled his fancy so much, that he laughed with all his might. "Nevertheless," he said, after having listened to our dissertation, "I will be sure to recollect what you have been

telling me; and when I get home again to my family, I will tell my wife that she has got a soul. She will be a little astonished I think."

The Chinese Christian women feel deeply how much they owe to a religion that is releasing them from the hard bondage in which they have hitherto groaned, and which, whilst guiding them on the way to eternal life, procures for them even in this world joys and consolations that seem made expressly for them. They show themselves grateful too; they are full of fervour and zeal; and one may say that the progress that has been made in the propagation of the faith in the Celestial Empire is principally owing to them. They maintain the regularity and exactness of the prayers in the Christian communities; they may be seen braving the prejudices of public opinion, and practising with much self-devotion works of Christian charity, even towards the Pagans, taking care of the sick, collecting and adopting the children abandoned by their mothers. It is they who in times of persecution confess the faith in presence of the Mandarins, with most courage and perseverance. In general, indeed, the zeal of women in the cause of religion has been remarked in all ages and countries.

"History informs us, that whenever the Gospel has been preached in any country, women have always shown a particular interest in the Word of Life, and habitually preceded men in their divine eagerness to receive and propagate it. One would say that the response of Mary to the angel, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord,' finds a stronger echo in their souls. This was prefigured in the very commencement of Christianity in the persons of the holy friends of the Virgin, who, having run before even the well-beloved disciple to the tomb of the Saviour, were the first to become acquainted with the fact of the resurrection, and to announce it to the Apostles. Women have always held a high rank in the preaching of the Gospel.

"At the commencement of all great religious epochs, a mysterious celestial form—the form of a saint—is seen heralding its progress. When Christianity issued from the catacombs, Helena, the mother of Constantine, presented to the ancient Roman world the recovered cross, which Clotilda soon erected over the Frank cradle of modern society. The Church owes in part the greatest triumphs of St. Jerome to the hospitality offered to him by Saint Paula in her peaceful retreat at Palestine, where she instituted an academy for Roman Christian ladies. Monica, by her prayers, brought forth the true Augustine. In the middle ages, Saint Hildegarda, Saint Catherine of Sienna, Saint Theresa, preserved much better

than the greater part of the learned doctors of their time the tradition of a mystic philosophy—so good, so vivifying to the heart, the spring to which, in our own age, more than one soul, dried and withered by doubt, has come to bathe and refresh itself, and seek to return to truth by the way of love."—(Monseigneur Gerbet, *Keepsake Religieuse.*)

After the triumphal night at Leang-chan, we had a magnificent journey by a fine road across an enchanting country. The rays of the sun, indeed, were somewhat too powerful, but we were beginning to get accustomed to this high temperature, as we had got accustomed to the frost and snow of Tartary.

Towards the end of the day we stopped at a certain place named *Yao-tchang.* This town, though rather a considerable one, was not surrounded by ramparts. No Mandarin appeared to have a fixed residence there ; there was no Communal Palace, and consequently we were obliged to look out for the best lodging we could find. At first we made the experiment at an old inn, called on its sign the Hotel of the Beatitudes, and the chief of this establishment conducted us with great ceremony to what he called his chamber of honour. It was situated immediately over the kitchen, and it is very possible that it was for various reasons a very honourable apartment. But experienced travellers must not think only of vain glory, and it appeared to us that this chamber of honour, to which air and light only entered by a narrow skylight, was not altogether an eligible abode for us. In fact it was, to speak plainly, an abominable den, haunted by legions of mosquitoes, which on our entrance issued forth full of wrath from every corner, and began to whirl and buzz around us, and declare implacable war. There exhaled also from this gloomy hole such a noisome vapour of mouldy fusty antiquity, that the very idea of passing the night there made one sick. We were assured, nevertheless, that this was the best hotel at Yao-tchang, and it is by no means impossible, judging from the general aspect of the locality, that it might be so. Whether we liked it or not, therefore, it seemed we should have to put up with it ; and we were making our preparations to manage as well as we could, when the smoke from the kitchen chimney, after having climbed slowly up the steps of the black narrow staircase, began to invade our chamber of honour in such quantities that it was not possible to remain there any longer. The acrid nature of the smoke pained our eyes, so that we descended weeping to the kitchen, in search of Master Ting, whom we found stuffed into a corner, intoxicating himself with opium. As soon as he saw us, he raised his head a

little from his bamboo pillow, and asked whether we were comfortable upstairs. "Not very; we are suffocated by foul air, blinded by smoke, and devoured by mosquitoes."

"Those three things are very bad," responded Master Ting, laying down his pipe, and exerting himself so far as to raise himself into a sitting posture; "but what is to be done?—there is no Communal Palace in this place, and the other inns are worse than this. The case is very difficult."

"No, not very difficult; what we want is a little cool fresh air. We will go into the country, and take up our lodging under a tree. We were accustomed to sleep thus in the open air for a long time."

"Yes; it is said that this custom exists among the Monguls, in the Land of Grass, but here, in the Central Kingdom, it is not received. Men of quality cannot pass the night in the fields with birds and insects; the Rites are opposed to it. But wait a moment; I think I know a good place; I will go and see about it:" and thereupon our dear Mandarin rose up, put out his little smoking lamp, took his fan and went out.

We waited for his return at the door of the inn, and a short time afterwards we saw him coming back, taking as long strides as he possibly could, and addressing to us from a distance, with his two arms, some telegraphic signs, which, on account of their multiplicity and their extreme complication, we could not understand. We were inclined to think, nevertheless, that Master Ting had made a discovery. As soon as he was near enough to make us hear, he cried, in his sharp nasal tones, "Let us move directly; we can go and lodge at the theatre: it's an excellent place for seeing and breathing!"

Without asking for any more explanation, we went back into the house. A porter appeared, who took up our baggage, and, in the twinkling of an eye, we had left the Hotel of Beatitudes to become tenants of the theatre of Yao-tchang. This theatre formed part of a great Bonze Convent, and was situated in an immense court-yard opposite to the principal pagoda. Its construction was rather remarkable, in comparison with the numerous edifices of this kind to be met with in China. Twelve great granite columns supported a vast square platform surmounted by a pavilion richly ornamented, and supported on pillars of varnished wood.

A broad stone staircase, situated at the back of the building, led to the platform, first into an apartment intended for the actors, and thence to the stage by two side doors, which served for

entrances and exits. Upon the stage were placed some chairs and a table, and there we supped by the light of the moon and stars, as well as of a number of lanterns, which the directors of the theatre had had kindled in our honour; it was really a charming spectacle, and one altogether unlooked for. If we had not taken the precaution to have the great gate of the Bonze Convent shut, we should soon have had the whole population of Yao-tchang in the space that was intended to serve for a pit. It is certain that the inhabitants of this place had never seen on their stage anything they would think as curious as ourselves. We heard a tumultuous mob outside, demanding with loud cries to be allowed a sight of the two men from the Western seas at supper. They seemed to think we must have some quite peculiar and extraordinary method of eating. Some succeeded in getting upon the roof of the Bonze Convent, and some had climbed over the enclosure and up into some high trees, whence they could command a view of us, and where we saw them jumping about among the leaves like large monkies. These curious and intrepid persons must have been much disappointed to see us eating our rice with chopsticks, quite in the established Chinese fashion.

The evening was delightfully fine, and the air delicious on this platform, where we begged our servant to place our beds, as we desired to pass the night there. All was made ready, and we wished to go to bed; but our watchful observers manifested no inclination to quit their posts, and at last we had to put out the lanterns, in order to drive them home. As they departed, we heard some of them say, "Why, these men are just like us!" "Not quite," said another; "the little devil has very large eyes, and the tall one a very pointed nose. I noticed that difference."

At break of day, Master Ting arrived, presented himself on the stage, and was so obliging as to set about waking us, by giving a roll on an enormous drum which stood in a corner, and, doubtless, served for the orchestra, when there was a performance.

After having thus exhibited his talents as a drummer, he bethought himself to give us, also, a specimen of his dramatic capabilities. He therefore placed himself in the middle of the stage, threw himself into a theatrical attitude, sang a song with much gesticulation, and then undertook, *solus*, a very animated dialogue, changing his voice and his place, when the turn of the supposed interlocutor came. When the dialogue was finished, he was not tired, but favoured us, also, with a taste of his quality as a tumbler. "Now," said he, "do you pay attention, I am going to show you some tricks of agility;" and in a moment, there he was.

leaping, gambolling, pirouetting, and tumbling head over heels. But, just as he was at the height of his performance, a door of the Bonze Convent was heard to open, and he immediately stopped short, and rushed off into the slips, saying it would never do to allow the people to see a Mandarin mimicking the play-actors.

We profited by his absence to get up, and very soon all the people of our escort, who the preceding night had been obliged to disperse and seek a lodging, were assembled at the gates. The palanquin bearers and porters arrived shortly after, and all was made ready for our departure.

Yao-tchang is built on the banks of the Blue River, whose tranquil and majestic course we could perceive from the top of the Bonze Convent; and, although we had more than once protested against travelling by water, we thought we would make one more experiment, and see whether we could not manage to make it more agreeable than it had been the first time.

In a very long journey, some change in the mode of travelling is always desirable, as the uniformity becomes at last excessively wearisome: the palanquin has, doubtless, its advantages, which are not to be despised; but to be for a long time together shut up every day in a cage, and balanced upon the shoulders of four unfortunate fellows, whom you see, panting, and perspiring with heat and fatigue,—one does, sometimes, get rather tired of that.

We proposed, therefore, to our conductors to make a stage by water; the proposal was received with enthusiasm, and, for fear we should change our minds, everybody made as much haste as possible in preparing for the embarcation: as they knew that we had a horror of dawdling, they displayed a really marvellous activity. According to our recommendation, two boats were hired, one for ourselves and the Mandarins, the other for the soldiers, attendants, and palanquin bearers; and as soon as ever we came on board, they weighed anchor, and we set off, the beauty of the weather and the calmness of the water affording us hopes of a pleasant journey. The cabin we occupied was spacious, and pretty well ventilated; and if not absolutely clean, was at least *tolerably* dirty.

We had not yet had time to offer Master Ting our compliments on the brilliant theatrical abilities he had developed, and we now expressed to him the happiness we felt in admiring in him a talent that we had not expected. Our little dose of flattery had a magical effect. After having replied, with due modesty, that he had no talent of the sort, he immediately proposed to go through a little dramatic piece in the cabin, with the assistance of the two

military Mandarins, who also volunteered to take a part. There was no need of any long preparation; the proposal was scarcely made before the two functionaries had begun their comedy, if one may give that name to a buffoonish dialogue, seasoned with grimace and contortion.

Their *repertoire* appeared inexhaustible, and, now they had once begun, we had great difficulty in inducing them to resume a language and manners more in accordance with their official dignity. To say the truth, however, our Mandarins really only wanted a little more practice, and a rather better memory, to make excellent actors. There is, perhaps, not a people in the world who carry so far their taste and passion for theatrical entertainments as the Chinese. We said just now that they were a nation of cooks, and we might also assert, with truth, that they are a nation of actors. These men have minds and bodies endowed with so much suppleness and elasticity, that they can transform themselves at will, and express by turns the most opposite passions. There is, in fact, a good deal of the monkey in their nature, and, when one has lived some time among them, one cannot but wonder how people in Europe could ever take it into their heads that China was a kind of vast academy, peopled with sages and philosophers. Their gravity and their wisdom, exclusive of some official proceedings, are scarcely found out of their classical books. The Celestial Empire has much more resemblance to an immense fair, where, amidst a perpetual flux and reflux of buyers and sellers, of brokers, loungers, and thieves, you see in all quarters stages and mountebanks, jokers and comedians, labouring uninterruptedly, to amuse the public. Over the whole surface of the country, in the eighteen provinces, in the towns of the first, second and third order, in the burghs and the villages, rich and poor, Mandarins and people, all the Chinese, without exception, are passionately addicted to dramatic representations. There are theatres everywhere; the great towns are full of them, and the actors play night and day. There is no little village that has not its theatre, which is usually placed opposite to the pagoda, and sometimes even forms a part of it. In some circumstances the permanent theatres are not found sufficient, and then the Chinese construct temporary ones, with wonderful facility, out of bamboo. The Chinese theatre is always extremely simple, and its arrangements are such as to exclude all idea of scenic illusion. The decorations are fixed, and do not change as long as the piece lasts. One would never know what they were intended for, if the actors themselves did not take care to inform the public, and correct the motionless character of the

scenes by verbal explanations. The only arrangement that is ever made with a view to scenic effect is the introduction of a kind of trap-door in the front of the stage, that serves for the entrances and exits of supernatural personages, and goes by the name of the "Gate of Demons."

The collections of Chinese dramatic pieces are very extensive; the richest is that of the Mongol dynasty, called the *yuen*, and it is from this repertory that various pieces, translated by learned Europeans, have been taken. With respect to their literary merit, we may quote the judgment pronounced on them by M. Edouard Biot. "The plot of all these pieces," says that learned Chinese scholar, "is very simple; the actors themselves announce the person they represent; there is seldom any connection between the scenes, and very often the most burlesque details are mingled with the gravest subjects.*

"In general, it does not appear that these pieces deserve to be rated above our old booth plays; and we may believe that the dramatic art in China is still in its infancy, if we can trust the accounts of travellers who have been present at theatrical performances at Canton, and even at Pekin.

"It may be that its imperfect state depends in a great measure on the degraded condition of the Chinese actors, who are mere servants, hired for wages by a speculator, and who have to please an ignorant mob, in order to earn their wretched subsistence. But, if we find little intrinsic merit, in the Chinese *chefs-d'œuvres* which have been presented to European readers, they cannot but be curious, regarded as studies of manners; and, in this point of view, we sincerely thank the learned men who have introduced them to us."

The companies of Chinese actors are not attached to any theatre in particular; they are all of the itinerant class, going wherever they are wanted, and travelling with an enormous apparatus of costumes and decorations. The appearance of these caravans is very peculiar, and recalls the picturesque descriptions of our gangs of gipsies. You often meet with them on the rivers, which they travel on by preference, for reasons of economy.

These wandering bands are usually hired for a certain number of days; sometimes by Mandarins or rich private persons, but more frequently by associations formed in the various quarters of towns and in villages.

* It might have been added that Chinese dramas are full of very equivocal jokes, and often of revolting obscenity.

There is always some pretext for getting up a play — the promotion of a Mandarin, a good harvest, a lucrative speculation, a danger to be averted, the cessation of a drought, or of rain, every event, whether fortunate or unfortunate, must always be celebrated by a theatrical performance. The heads of the district assemble, and decree that there shall be a play, lasting so many days, and then everybody has to contribute to the expenses in proportion to his means. Sometimes this is done by one person, who wishes to offer a treat to his fellow-citizens, or to obtain for himself the character of being a generous man.

In commercial transactions of importance there is often a stipulation that, over and above the price, there shall be a certain number of dramatic entertainments given by one or other party. Sometimes disputes arise concerning this article of the treaty, and he who is declared by the arbiters to have been in the wrong has to pay one or two representations by way of fine.

The lower classes of the people are always admitted gratuitously to the theatre, and they never fail to profit by the permission. Some theatre or other is always to be found open at every hour of the day or night in the great towns. The villages are not so favoured, and as they have but few subscribers, they can only afford to have the actors at certain periods of the year. If they hear, however, that there is a play to be performed anywhere in their neighbourhood, the villagers will often, after all the toil of the day, walk five or six miles to see it.

The spectators are always in the open air, and the place assigned to them has no precise limit. Every one chooses the best post he can find, in the street, upon the roof of a house, or up a tree, so that the clamour and confusion prevailing in these assemblies may easily be imagined. The whole audience eats, drinks, smokes, and talks as much as it pleases. The small dealers in provisions move about incessantly among the crowd; and whilst the actors are exerting all their talents to revive before the public some great national or tragic event, these merchants are howling themselves hoarse to announce the bits of sugar-cane, sweet fried potatoes, and other dainties contained in their ambulatory shops.

It is not the custom at theatres in China to applaud or hiss. Women are forbidden to appear on the stage, and their parts are played by young men, who imitate so well the feminine voice and dress, that the resemblance is perfect. Custom does, however, permit the women to dance on the rope, or perform equestrian feats; and they show, especially in the northern provinces, prodigious skill in these exercises. One can hardly conceive how,

with their little feet, they can dance on a tight rope, stand firmly on horseback, and perform many other difficult feats.

As we have before had occasion to remark, the Chinese succeed wonderfully well in all that depends on address and agility. Jugglers are very numerous, and the skill of many of them would astonish our most celebrated sleight-of-hand practitioners.

Our voyage on the Blue River was rapid and extremely pleasant. We arrived at *Fou-ki-hien* in the afternoon, having gone 150 *li*, or about 45 miles, in four hours and a half.

CHAP. VII.

Temple of Literary Composition. — Quarrel with a Doctor.—A Citizen in the Cangue. — His Deliverance. — Visit to the Tribunal of Ou-chan. - The Prefect and Military Commandant of Ou-chan. — Medical Jurisprudence of the Chinese.— Inspection of Dead Bodies.— Frequent Suicides in China.— Considerations on this Subject.—Singular Character of Chinese Politeness.—The Boundaries which separate the Frontier of Sse-tchouen from that of Hou-pé. —Glance over Sse-tchouen.— Its principal Productions. — Character of its Inhabitants.— Kouang-ti, God of War and Patron of the Mantchoo Dynasty. —Official Worship paid to him.—Wells of Salt and Fire.— State of Scientific Knowledge among the Chinese. — State of Christianity in the Province of Sse-tchouen.

FOU-KI-HIEN is a town of the third rank, built on the left bank of the Blue River. We were struck on our arrival by the distinguished and elegant appearance of its inhabitants. It is said that literature is here held in great honour, and that the district of Fou-ki-hien contains immense numbers of students and lettered men of every grade.

As the Communal Palace is situated in a not very airy quarter, a very cool and pleasant lodging had been prepared for us in the *Wen-tchang-koun*, or Temple of Literary Composition, where the assemblies of the literary corporation are held, and the examinations for degrees take place.

We found this Wen-tchang-koun larger and richer than any edifice of the kind that we had ever visited; it contained several halls devoted to special purposes, which were wainscoted with varnished wood, and furnished in the ornamental style of Chinese luxury and grandeur. These saloons are destined for literary meetings, as well as for banquets; for in China the admirers of the belles lettres by no means disdain gastronomic indulgences, and are as well inclined to criticise a good dish as a literary com-

position. When the company has become somewhat elevated with poetry or rice wine, they are invited to a stroll by a magnificent garden ; on one side of which is seen, among great trees, a pretty pagoda, erected in honour of Confucius, and on the other a range of little cells, where, during the examinations, students are shut up, to write on the questions assigned them. No one is to have in his cell anything more than an inkstand, some of the little brushes used for pens, and some blank paper; all communication with the outer world is interdicted until they have finished their composition, and to guard against the infraction of this important rule, a sentinel is placed at the door of each student.

An octagonal tower with four floors rises in the middle of the garden, and as we were known to be very fond of fresh air, they were so kind as to lodge us in the uppermost one, whence we enjoyed an enchanting prospect of the various quarters of the town, with its enclosure of embattled walls ; beyond them the country, scattered over with farms, and covered with rich and varied vegetation, and the noble Blue River, whose windings we could trace far through the plain, till, after hiding itself for a little while behind green hills, it reappeared, and then finally was lost to sight in the horizon.

As soon as we were installed, like feudal lords, in our donjon keep, the literary graduates and the functionaries of the town hastened to pay us a visit. We could not, however, afford more than a few hours to the demands of ceremony, for we much desired repose. The gentle rocking motion of the boat and the monotony of the languid conversation had both contributed to overpower us with sleep. As soon as possible, therefore, we told our servant to say we could not be seen any more, locked our door, and lay down on our reed mats.

While we were still in the transition state between sleeping and waking, we heard a voice not far from our door, and, listening, could distinguish the voice of our servant quarrelling, as it seemed, with a visitor who would take no denial, and insisted on seeing us, whether we would or not.

The visitor was alleging his title of doctor, and asserting that as the Wen-tchang-koun was the property of men of letters, it gave him the right of visiting, and even scrutinising, those who had taken up their lodging in it. Wei-chan resisted courageously, till at length the other, offended at an opposition so lively and unexpected, went so far as to strike him. The vociferation now became louder, the curious, as usual in such cases, came running from all quarters, and it was evidently necessary for us to get up, and give a lesson in the "Rites" to this impertinent doctor.

As soon as the door was opened, it was easy to see how the matter stood, for Wei-chan, fairly boiling over with anger, seemed ready to fly at the doctor, and eat him up. He, on his side, was so occupied with his antagonist, that he did not notice us, till he felt himself seized strongly by the arm, and, turning suddenly, was petrified at finding himself face to face with a Western devil in a yellow cap. We dragged him into our chamber, where he was summoned to give an account of himself.

"Who are you?"

"I am a doctor of this town."

"No! you are not a doctor, you are a rude and ignorant man. What do you want?"

"I came to walk in the Temple of Literary Composition, to recreate my mind and my heart."

"Go and recreate yourself elsewhere, and don't come here disturbing our rest. Take yourself quickly out of our presence! If you like you can tell your friends that you have seen us, and that we drove you out because you understood nothing of the social virtues."

The doctor showed some symptoms of resistance. "But who then," cried he, "is master in the Wen-tchang-koun?"

"In our room we are masters, and, consequently, you must get out as fast as you can; and if you don't go by the staircase, we will throw you out of the window. Will you go?"

The doctor, doubtless, thought we were in earnest in this threat, for he disappeared in a moment, and we heard him running down the stairs at a great rate. This might be, perhaps, a good opportunity to say something of the pedantry and arrogance of the lettered Chinese; but we shall have occasion to speak on the subject by and by.

This little incident had quite taken away our inclination to sleep, so, after the doctor had departed, we came down from our tower to explore the Temple of Literary Composition.

We were crossing the garden in the direction of the pagoda of Confucius, when we perceived, at the end of a long corridor that led to the street, an unfortunate man on his knees, and loaded with a great *cangue*. The cangue, as is well known, is an enormous block of wood, with a hole in the middle, through which the head of the criminal is passed; it presses with all its weight upon his shoulders, so that this atrocious torture makes a man, as it were, the foot of a huge heavy table.

We walked towards him, and the miserable creature immediately began to implore our mercy, and begged us to pardon him.

We came nearer, and were greatly affected to see in this horrible situation a very respectable-looking man, with an honest face, who was shedding tears copiously, and imploring our forgiveness. It was a heartrending spectacle.

We came nearer to read the sentence, which, according to custom, was written in large letters on strips of white paper, pasted on the cangue; and scarcely had our eyes glanced over the inscription, than we felt a cold perspiration covering our foreheads. This is what we read on several strips of paper: —

"Condemned to fifteen days of cangue, the nights not excepted, for the offence of disrespect towards the strangers of the West, who are under the protection of the Emperor. Let the people tremble, reflect, and correct their faults!"

On each of the three strips there was the red seal of the Prefect of Fou-ki-hien.

Fortunately the Tribunal was only a few yards off; we ran thither, and obtained a short interview with the Prefect, who immediately came back with us, to set the unfortunate man at liberty. But before taking off the cangue, the Prefect thought proper to address to him a long speech, first on the merciful nature of our hearts, and then on the practice of the three social relations. We had hardly patience to listen to him, and there were some moments when we really should have been glad to see the untimely speechifier in the place of the sufferer, whose whole crime, it appeared, was the having said to one of the guardians of the temple, "Some years ago the Western devils came from the South, but now they come from the North too." The poor fellow had, it is true, applied to us a not very polite nickname, but he was not the inventor of it. It is under this malignant denomination the Europeans are best known in China; and if all those who use it were to be put in the cangue, the whole Empire would soon find its way there, beginning with the Mandarins.

As soon as the poor man had been released, we invited him to come to our room, and served him with tea and a little collation, explaining to him, as well as we could, how grieved we were to have been the involuntary cause of his deplorable adventure. Our reconciliation was already complete, when an old man with a white beard and two very young men were introduced to us; they were the father and the sons of the person who had become our friend in so singular a manner.

They threw themselves on their knees to express their gratitude for what they had the simplicity to call our benefits. They burst into tears, and seemed not to know what to say to express

their feelings, till at last we really could not bear it any longer. We had to do indeed with Chinese, whose sincerity may always be a little suspected; but it is a horrible thing to see an old man sobbing and shedding tears. We rose, therefore, and bid farewell to these good people, for whom our passage through their country had been the occasion of such lively and painful emotions.

We quitted Fou-ki-hien with a certain feeling of regret; for it was not with this town as with so many others which left us no profound recollections, and which we traversed and left almost with the same indifference as our temporary encampments in the desert. We had only passed half a day at Fou-ki-hien, but we had felt there such strong and varied emotions, that it seemed as if we had made a long stay. The Temple of Literary Composition, that tower from the top of which we commanded a view of the town and country; the rash enterprise of the intrepid doctor; the unfortunate citizen sinking under the cangue, his deliverance, the pathetic visit of his father and children — all this seemed to make an epoch, and to leave behind it the most vivid remembrance. Time is a profound mystery, and the human soul alone is capable of estimating its duration. To live long is to think and feel much.

We had now to choose between the route by water and that by land, for the course of the Blue River would take us as far as our next stage. The last experiment had succeeded so well, that we had a mind to try it a second time; and we felt sure beforehand of finding the people of our escort quite of our opinion. In a boat we went faster, more conveniently, and with much less expense; they could, therefore, realise enormous profits, which they divided among them, though always in such a manner that the Mandarins had the greatest part. The palanquin bearers also found their advantage in it; for after having passed the day in playing at cards, they still received their customary wages; and provided the navigation was not dangerous, and that they would give us a good boat, we on our part were happy to be able to procure our conductors these advantages.

This second experiment was also crowned with complete success, and quite reconciled us to the Blue River, for which we had before felt so great an antipathy. We came, from time to time, to some rather difficult places, reefs of rocks on a level with the water; but the skill and experience of our mariners always carried us past them without damage. It was almost night when we arrived at *Ou-Chan*, where we were conducted to the Communal Palace, well received and well treated. The evening wore on, however, and we had not yet seen any of the authorities of the place, except

an officer of very inferior rank, who held an appointment at the port, in the Salt Custom-house. This was by no means conformable to established rule; and as we were always on our guard to suffer no encroachment on the privileges that had been granted to us, and which constituted our strength and our security, we begged to have it explained why we were deprived of the honour of a visit from the Mandarins of Ou-chan? The reply was that the Prefect was absent. "And his deputy?" "Absent too." "And the military commandant of the district?" "He set off this morning. All the functionaries, civil and military, are absent on government business." We treated this as a bad joke, and thought we should have to put to rights, every day, a machine that was constantly threatening to get out of order.

We ordered our palanquin, and invited Master Ting to be good enough to accompany us immediately to the Prefect's tribunal. He made no objection, and we set off. The tribunal was closed; we had it opened. All the lights were out; we had them kindled. We entered the saloon of reception, and the servants of the Prefect hastened to offer us tea; but no ball, of any colour whatever, was to be seen. At last, the *sse-ye* presented himself. These sse-ye are counsellors or pedagogues, whom the magistrates choose for themselves, to aid and direct them in the management of affairs; they are paid by the magistrate, and do not belong officially to the administration, but their influence is immense; they are in fact the springs that set the wheels of the tribunal in motion. The sse-ye of Ou-chan assured us, that the Prefect and the other principal functionaries had been absent for several days, engaged in the investigation of a cause of the highest importance. We begged his pardon for coming to disturb him at so late an hour; but added, that having to see the Prefect, we would, since he was absent, await his return. No doubt that would in some measure delay our arrival at Canton; but that this would be of no great consequence, as our business allowed of a certain latitude; and thereupon we returned to the Communal Palace.

Master Ting had heard our conversation with the sse-ye; and he needed no more to convince him that we were about to take up our quarters at Ou-chan, to await the return of the Prefect, and that until then nothing would induce us to move. He had by this time become a little accustomed to the barbarism of our character and the inflexibility of our resolutions. We had hardly, therefore, returned to the Communal Palace before he began laughing to warn the travellers that they might sleep in peace, for that it was our intention to fix ourselves definitely at Ou-chan.

The next day, when the sun was tolerably high, all the inhabitants of the palace were still plunged in sleep; the most profound silence reigned all over it. Nothing was to be heard but the sound of a torrent, which behind the house was dashing over great rocks that opposed its passage.

This tranquillity rather flattered us, for it showed the attention that had been paid to what we had said the evening before.

Soon after noon, however, we heard, all on a sudden, a great clamour mingled with the sound of the tam-tams and the noisy detonations of fire-works. An officer of the tribunal now came to inform us that the Prefect had arrived with the other Mandarins of the town. We made no delay in receiving his visit, and he presented himself, accompanied by the military commandant of the district, who was decorated with the Blue Ball, and bore the title of *tou-sse*. He was of the same rank as *Ly*, the "Pacificator of Kingdoms," who after having long served us for an escort across the frightful route of Thibet, died so miserably without ever seeing his country again.

The Chinese have so elaborately developed their system of lying and deceit, that it is very difficult to believe them, even when they do speak the truth. Thus we were persuaded that this absence and return of the Prefect and the Mandarins of Ou-chan was only a trick, yet we were nevertheless mistaken; and the Chinese, extraordinary as it may seem, had not told a lie. As soon as we saw the Prefect and the military commandant, it was easy for us to perceive that they really had just come from a journey: the exhaustion evident in their faces, the dust with which they were covered, their disordered garments, all announced that they had been passing many hours in their palanquins.

The Prefect was a man of about sixty years of age, with a grey beard, a short thick-set figure, and a merely moderate amount of *embonpoint*. His face had an expression of simplicity and good nature, extremely rare in Chinese physiognomies, and especially in those of the Mandarins. The tou-sse was about the same age, and rather above the middle size, though a little bent; his countenance also was very open, but he did not belong to the Chinese race. He was of Mongol origin, and had passed his youth in the Land of Grass, leading a nomadic life in the deserts; several of the countries he had wandered over were perfectly well known to us. When we spoke the Mongol language to him, he seemed quite affected, and would certainly have shed some tears, if he had not feared to compromise his character as a soldier. These two personages pleased us; we were very glad we had waited for

them, and they, on their side, seemed very well satisfied to see us, which we believed so much the more, because they did not endeavour to express it by any of the emphatic formulas of Chinese politeness. We read it on their faces; and this method afforded us a far more satisfactory proof than the other would have done.

The Prefect of Ou-chan entered into some details concerning the motives of his absence. He had gone with his assessors to a village under his jurisdiction, to inquire into the case of a man found dead in a field, and determine whether the death had been a natural one, or the result of a murder or suicide. We addressed several questions to him, on a certain method employed by Chinese justice, in order to make the wounds and contusions of a dead body appear, even after decomposition has begun, and thus to ascertain the mode of death.

We had heard a great deal of the measures adopted by magistrates on such occasions, and, indeed, some such extraordinary things, that we were very glad to get some information about them from an authentic source.

The Prefect had not now time to satisfy our curiosity on all points; but he promised to come back in the evening, and bring with him the book entitled *Si-yuen;* that is to say, "The Washing of the Pit;" a work on medical jurisprudence, very celebrated in China, and which should be in the hands of all magistrates. The Prefect kept his word; and the evening was devoted to a rapid examination of this curious book, upon which also the Mandarins of Ou-chan did not fail to furnish many commentaries, as well as to relate a number of anecdotes that we will not repeat, as we have no means of testing their truth.

In all times, the Chinese government has shown great solicitude for the discovery of homicide and the examination of bodies found dead. After the conflagration and destruction of the libraries by the famous Tsing-che-hoang, there remained no work on medical jurisprudence of older date than the dynasty of Song, which began in the year 960 of our era.

The Mongol dynasty of Yuen, which succeeded that of Song, had the work remodelled, and enlarged it with the accounts of a number of ancient customs that tradition had preserved in various parts of the Empire. After the dynasty of Yuen, that of Ming instituted researches and examinations on this important question, and had many successive works published for the instruction of magistrates. The Mantchoo dynasty has published a new edition of the Si-yuen, or "Washing of the Pit." To dig this pit a dry

and, if possible, clayey soil must be chosen; the pit must be made five or six feet long, three wide, and as many deep; it is then to be filled with dry branches of trees and brushwood, and a fire kept up in it, till the sides and the bottom are heated almost to a white heat. The ashes are then taken out, a quantity of rice wine poured in, and the dead body placed over the opening, on a hurdle made of osier twigs; then the whole is covered with tiles placed in a hollow form, so as to leave every part of the body free to be acted upon by the vapour of the rice wine. Two hours afterwards, every mark of a wound or a blow will appear quite distinctly. The Si-yuen declares that the same operation may be performed with the bones, and the same results obtained; and it adds, that if the blows have been of a nature to cause death, the marks will always appear on the bones.

The Mandarins of Ou-chan asserted that all this was perfectly correct; but we have ourselves had no opportunity of verifying their assertion.

It is the duty of the Mandarins to perform this operation every time that there arises the least suspicion concerning the death of an individual; they are even obliged to have the body disinterred if it has been buried, and to examine it carefully, even though the exhalations from it should be likely to endanger their lives; "for," says the Si-yuen, "the interest of society requires it, and it is not less glorious to brave the danger of death, to defend one's fellow-citizens from the knife of the assassin, than from the sword of the enemy. He who has no courage, ought not to be a magistrate, and should resign his office."

The Si-yuen passes in review all imaginable methods of causing death, and explains the mode of ascertaining them by examination of the body.

The Chinese appear to have invented a terrific variety of modes of murder. The article "strangling" especially is very rich; the author distinguishes those "Strangled by hanging," "Strangled on the knees," "Strangled lying down," "Strangled with a slip knot," and "Strangled with a turning knot." He describes carefully all the marks likely to appear on the body, and indicates the differences where the individual has strangled himself. On the subject of drowning he says, that the bodies of the drowned are very different from those thrown into the water after death. The first have the abdomen much distended, the hair sticking to the head, foam in the mouth, the hands and feet stiff, and the sole of the foot extremely white. These signs are never found in those thrown into the water after being suffocated, poisoned, or killed

in any other way. As it often happens, in China, that a murderer endeavours to conceal his crime by a fire, the Si-yuen, under the chapter of the "Burned," teaches how to find out, by inspection of the body, whether the deceased has been killed before the fire or suffocated by it; among other things it says, that in the first case, neither ashes nor vestiges of fire are found in the mouth and nose, whilst these signs are always found in the latter.

The last chapter treats of the various kinds of poison, and their antidotes; but however skilful and vigilant magistrates may be, it may easily be supposed that all these practices make a very imperfect substitute for the opening of the body, which ancient and inveterate prejudices forbid to be done in China.

It is impossible to read the Si-yuen without being convinced that the number of attempts against life in this country is very considerable, and especially that suicide is very common. The extreme readiness with which the Chinese are induced to kill themselves, is almost inconceivable; some mere trifle, a word almost, is sufficient to cause them to hang themselves, or throw themselves to the bottom of a well; the two favourite modes of suicide. In other countries, if a man wishes to wreak his vengeance on an enemy, he tries to kill him; in China, on the contrary, he kills himself. This anomaly depends upon various causes, of which these are the principal:—In the first place, Chinese law throws the responsibility of a suicide on those who may be supposed to be the cause or occasion of it. It follows, therefore, that if you wish to be revenged on an enemy, you have only to kill yourself to be sure of getting him into horrible trouble; for he falls immediately into the hands of *justice*, and will certainly be tortured and ruined, if not deprived of life. The family of the suicide also usually obtains, in these cases, considerable damages; so that it is by no means a rare case for an unfortunate man to commit suicide in the house of a rich one, from a morbid idea of family affection. In killing his enemy, on the contrary, the murderer exposes his own relatives and friends to injury, disgraces them, reduces them to poverty, and deprives himself of funeral honours, a great point for a Chinese, and concerning which he is extremely anxious. It is to be remarked also, that public opinion, so far from disapproving of suicide, honours and glorifies it. The conduct of a man who destroys his own life, to avenge himself on an enemy whom he has no other way of reaching, is regarded as heroic and magnanimous.

Finally, we may say that the Chinese dread suffering much more than death. They will sell their lives very cheaply if they

can hope to get rid of them in an expeditious manner; and it is, perhaps, this consideration that has induced Chinese justice to render the trial of a criminal almost more frightful and terrible than death.

China is the country of contrasts; all that you see there is the opposite of what you see anywhere else. Among barbarians, and even in civilised countries where true notions of justice have not sufficiently purified the public conscience, you see the strong, the rich, the powerful, making the poor and weak tremble, oppressing them and sporting with their lives with frightful carelessness; in China, it is often the weak who make the strong and powerful tremble, by holding suspended over their heads the threat of suicide, and forcing them by that means to do them justice, spare them, and help them. The poor have recourse sometimes to this terrible extremity, to avenge themselves for the hard-heartedness of the rich, and it is by no means unusual to repel an insult by killing yourself. It would be interesting to compare this mode of duelling *à la Chinoise* with that which is in use among European nations; there might be traced some curious analogies, and one would be forced to agree that there is pretty much the same extravagance and absurdity in the one case as in the other.

The functionaries of Ou-chan treated us with remarkable affability, and our talk was prolonged far into the night; each one reported concerning the manners and customs of his country; China, Mongolia, and France asserted their respective pretensions, by the mouth of their representatives; and it was at last agreed that all countries have a fund of good and bad qualities, which pretty well balance each other; though we endeavoured, nevertheless, to prove that Christian nations are, or might be, more virtuous than others, since they were always under the influence of a holy and divine religion, tending essentially to develope good qualities and stifle bad ones. The Mandarins declared our reasoning quite conclusive; and asserted, if not from conviction at least from courtesy, that France occupied incontestably the first rank among the ten thousand kingdoms of the earth. Their good-will towards us was even carried so far as to invite us seriously and sincerely to stop another day at Ou-chan; the temptation was great, but we resisted it, because it was essential to preserve for our extraordinary halts the peculiar character that we had endeavoured to give them. Besides, since the Mandarins of Ou-chan had had the politeness to invite us to stop, we were so much the more bound to have the politeness to go. Politeness before everything! It is quite the custom in China to give the most pressing invita-

tions, but only on condition that they shall be refused ; to accept them would be to show that you had had a very bad education.

During the time when we were at our Northern Mission, we were witnesses of a most curious fact, which was wonderfully characteristic of the Chinese. It was one of our festival days, and we were to celebrate the Holy Office at the house of the first Catechist, where there was a tolerably large chapel, to which the Christians of the neighbouring villages were in the habit of coming in great numbers. After the ceremony, the master of the house posted himself in the middle of the court, and began to call to the Christians who were leaving the chapel: — "Don't let anybody go away. To-day I invite every one to eat rice in my house ;" and then he ran from one group to another urging them to stay. But every one alleged some reason or other for going, and went. The courteous host appeared quite distressed ; at last he spied a cousin of his, who had almost reached the door, and rushed towards him saying, "What, cousin ! are you going too ? Impossible ! this is a holiday, and you really must stop." "No," said the other, "do not press me, I have business at home that I must attend to." "Business ! what to-day, a day of rest ! Absolutely you shall stop, I won't let you go ;" and he seized the cousin's robe and tried to bring him back by main force, while the desired guest struggled as well as he could, and sought to prove that his business was too pressing to allow of his remaining. "Well," said the host at last, "since you positively cannot stay to eat rice, we must at least drink a few glasses of wine together. I should be quite ashamed if my cousin went away from my house without taking anything." "Well," replied the cousin, "it don't take much time to drink a glass of wine," and he turned back ; they re-entered the house and sat down in the company room. The master then called in a loud voice, though without appearing to address any one in particular : — "Heat some wine, and fry two eggs !"

In the meantime, till the hot wine and fried eggs should arrive, the two lighted their pipes and began to gossip, and then they lit and smoked again, but the wine and eggs did not make their appearance.

The cousin, who most likely really had some business, at last ventured to inquire of his hospitable entertainer, how long he thought it would be before the wine would be ready.

"Wine !" replied the host, "wine ! Have we got any wine here ? Don't you know very well that I never drink wine ? it hurts my stomach."

"In that case," said the cousin, "surely you might have let me go. Why did you press me to stay?"

Hereupon the master of the mansion rose, and assumed an attitude of lofty indignation.

"Upon my word," said he, "anybody might know what country you come from! What! I have the politeness to invite you to drink wine, and you have not even the politeness to refuse! Where in the world have you learned your rites? Among the Mongols, I should think." And the poor cousin, understanding that he had been guilty of a terrible solecism, stammered some words of apology, and filling his pipe once more, departed.

We were ourselves present at this delightful little scene; and as soon as the cousin was gone, the least we could do was to have a good laugh; but the master of the house did not laugh, he was indignant. He asked us whether we had ever seen such an ignorant, stupid, absurd man as his cousin, and he returned always to his grand principle, that is to say, that a well-bred man will always render politeness for politeness, and that one ought kindly to refuse what another kindly offers; "otherwise," he cried, "what would become of us?" We listened without deciding the question for or against him; for in what depends upon the customs of nations, it is very difficult to have one sure and certain rule applicable to all; and in looking closely at the matter, we thought we could make out their peculiar views of politeness. Both parties by this means obtain, at small cost, the satisfaction of appearing generous and obliging to everybody, and on the other hand, everybody can obtain the satisfaction of knowing that he receives a great many kind invitations, and yet has the delicacy to refuse them. Yet, after all, it must be owned this is mere *Chinesery*.

The pressing solicitations of the Mandarins of Ou-chan notwithstanding, we next day resumed our march, like men who had been in good society, and studied the rites elsewhere than in the deserts of Mongolia. This day's journey was a very toilsome one; first, because it was two days since we had been in a palanquin, and our legs had lost the habit of bending; and secondly, because we had to traverse a mountainous country. Its aspect was not at all pleasing, but wild and melancholy. The soil was gravelly and sandy, and ill adapted to cultivation; we saw few villages, and when some miserable-looking farmhouses did appear here and there in the bottom of a valley, the inhabitants generally ran to us to ask for a few sapecks by way of alms.

Towards the afternoon, we climbed a rather steep hill, Master

Ting marching at the head of the column. As soon as he had reached the summit, he got out of his palanquin, and by degrees as the others arrived he made them stop too. We did not comprehend quite well the meaning of this manœuvre; but when we too reached the top of the hill, Master Ting invited us to alight from our palanquins, saying, "Come and see! Here finishes the province of Sse-tchouen. We are about to enter *Hou-pé*. This little ditch is the boundary of the two provinces, and I did not like to cross the mountain without pointing it out to you. See," he added, striding with one leg across the ditch, "now I have one leg in Sse-tchouen, and another in Hou-pé:" and he stood motionless for a minute, in order to enable us fully to conceive this astounding fact.

Several palanquin bearers, who seemed to think it very strange to have one leg in Sse-tchouen, and the other in Hou-pé, repeated several times the same interesting experiment, and succeeded just as well as the civil Mandarin. Then, after we had rested a short time, and looked eagerly to the right and the left, the way we had come and the way we were going, we set off again, and arrived shortly afterwards at *Pa-toung*.

Sse-tchouen (Four Valleys) is the largest province in China, and perhaps also the finest. So at least it appeared to us, after having compared it with the other parts of the Empire that we have had occasion to study in our various journeys. From the frontiers of Thibet to the boundaries of Hou-pé are reckoned forty days' march, equivalent nearly to an extent of three hundred leagues. Besides a great number of forts and war stations, there are counted in this province nine towns of the first class, and a hundred and fifteen of the second and third.

Its temperature is moderate, both in winter and summer, and neither the long and terrible frosts of the northern nor the stifling heats of the southern provinces are ever felt in it.

Its soil is, from the abundance of rivers by which it is watered, extremely fertile, and it is also pleasantly varied. Vast plains, covered by rich harvests of wheat and other kinds of corn, alternate with mountains crowned with forests, magnificently fertile valleys, lakes abounding in fish, and navigable rivers. The Yang-tse-kiang, one of the finest rivers in the world, traverses this province from south-west to north-east. Its fertility is such, that it is said the produce of a single harvest could not be consumed in it in ten years. Great numbers of textile and tinctorial plants are cultivated in it; among others the herbaceous indigo, which gives a fine blue colour, and a kind of hemp or thistle, from which

extremely fine and delicate fabrics are produced. On the hills are fine plantations of tea, of which all the most exquisite kinds are kept for the epicures of the province. The coarsest are sent off to the people of Thibet and Turkestan.

It is to Sse-tchouen that the pharmacists from all the provinces of the Empire send their travellers to lay in their stocks of medicinal plants; for, besides that immense quantities are collected in the mountains, they have the reputation of possessing more efficacious virtues than those found in other countries. A considerable trade is also carried on here with the rhubarb and musk brought from Thibet.

It would seem as if the richness and beauty of Sse-tchouen had exercised a great influence on its inhabitants; for their manners are much superior to those of the Chinese of the other provinces. The great towns are, at least relatively, clean and neat. The aspect of the villages, and even of the farms, bears witness to the comfortable circumstances of their inhabitants; and throughout Sse-tchouen you hear nothing of the unintelligible *patois* so common in the other provinces; — the language is nearly as pure as that spoken in Pekin.

The Sse-tchouennese are of a robust temperament and a more masculine physiognomy than that of the Chinese of the south; though at the same time not so harsh as that of the northerns. They have the character of being good soldiers, and it is mostly from amongst them that the greater number of military Mandarins is chosen. The province is rather proud of its warlike genius, and of having given birth to a famous general, of whom they have made a god of war. This Chinese Mars is the celebrated *Kouang-ti*, whose name is so popular throughout the Celestial Empire, and who was born in Sse-tchouen in the third century of our era. After gaining many splendid victories over the enemies of the Empire, he was killed, with his son *Kouang-ping*, who has been made his *aide-de-camp*.

The Chinese, who have of course not failed to fabricate a number of extravagant legends concerning him, pretend that he did not really die, but ascended to heaven, where he took his place amongst the gods, in order to preside over the fortunes of war. The Tartar Mantchoo dynasty, in ascending the Imperial throne of China, performed the apotheosis of Kouang-ti, and solemnly proclaimed him tutelary spirit of the dynasty. A great number of temples have been raised to him in all the provinces of the Empire, where he is usually represented sitting in a calm, but proud attitude.

His son Kouang-ping, armed *cap-à-pie*, stands at his left hand; and on his right hand is seen his faithful squire, holding a large sword, knitting a pair of very thick eyebrows, opening great, round, bloodshot eyes, and apparently intent on nothing but frightening all who look at him.

The worship of Kouang-ti belongs to the official state religion of China; the people trouble themselves very little about it, and care no more for their god of war than for any of the other Buddhist divinities. But the public functionaries, and especially the military Mandarins, are obliged, on certain days, to go and prostrate themselves in his temple, and burn sticks of incense in his honour. The Mantchoo dynasty, after having taken the trouble to make a god of him, appoint him to be the protector of the Empire, and raise magnificent pagodas in his honour, is of course not going to put up with indifference or want of devotion to him in its own servants.

The Mantchoos, who, in establishing the worship of Kouang-ti, probably had in view nothing more than a political object, and regarded it only as a means of influencing the minds of the soldiers, have not neglected to lend their authority to the fable of his appearance in all the subsequent wars of the Empire. At various epochs, especially during the war against the Eleuts, and more recently against the rebels of Turkestan, he has been plainly seen, hovering in the air, supporting the courage of the Imperial armies, and overwhelming their enemies with invisible arrows. It is certain, they say, that, with so powerful a protection, they can never fail of victory. One day, when a military Mandarin was relating to us with great *naïveté* stories of the prowess of the famous Kouang-ti, we bethought ourselves to ask him, whether he had appeared in the last war that the Empire was engaged in with the English. This question seemed to vex him a little, and, after a moment's hesitation, he said: "They say he did not, no one saw him."

"It was a very serious affair though, and his presence was by no means unnecessary."

"Don't let us talk any more of that war," said the Mandarin; "Kouang-ti certainly did not appear, and it is a very bad sign. They say," he added, lowering his voice, "that this dynasty is abandoned by Heaven, and that it will be soon overthrown."

This idea that the Mantchoo dynasty has finished its appointed career, and that another will shortly succeed to it, was very widely diffused in China in 1846; during our journey we several times heard it mentioned, and there is little doubt that this kind of vague

presentiment, prevailing for several years, was a very powerful auxiliary to the insurrection that broke out in 1851, and since then has made such gigantic progress.

The wonder of Sse-tchouen, and one that deserves to be placed even before the famous Kouang-ti, is what the Chinese call the *Yen-tsing* and *Ho-tsing*, wells of salt and wells of fire. We saw a great number of them, but without having time to examine them attentively enough to give a full description of them, and we will therefore quote on this subject a letter of M. Imbert, long a missionary in this province, but subsequently appointed Vicar Apostolic in Corea, where he had the honour to be martyred in 1838. The minute details contained in this letter are very fit to give an exact idea of the patient and laborious industry of the Chinese. We will therefore give the passage as it stands.

"The number of salt-wells is very considerable; there are some dozens of them in a tract of country of about ten leagues long by four or five broad. Every one here who has made a little money, looks out for a partner, and begins to dig one or more wells. Their manner of digging is not like ours; these people do everything in miniature; they have no idea of carrying on any operation on a grand scale, but with time and patience they attain their objects, and at much less expense than we do. They have not the art of opening rocks by blasting, and all these wells are in the rock. They are usually from fifteen to eighteen hundred French feet deep, and only five or six inches in diameter. The mode of proceeding is this. If there be a depth of three or four feet of soil on the surface, they plant in this a tube of hollow wood surmounted by a stone, in which an orifice of the desired size of four or five inches has been cut. Upon this they bring to work in the tube a rammer of three or four hundred pounds' weight, which is notched, and made a little concave above and convex below; a strong man, very lightly dressed, then mounts on a scaffolding, and dances all the morning on a kind of lever, that raises this rammer about two feet, and then lets it fall by its own weight. From time to time a few pails of water are thrown into the hole, to soften the material of the rock, and reduce it to pulp. The rammer is suspended to a rattan cord, not thicker than your finger, but as strong as our ropes of catgut.

"This cord is fixed to the lever, and a triangular piece of wood is attached to it, by which another man sitting near gives it a half-turn, so as to make the rammer fall in another direction. At noon this man mounts on the scaffold, and relieves his comrade

till the evening; and at night these two are replaced by another pair of workmen.

"When they have bored three inches, they draw up the tube, with all the matter it is loaded with, by means of a great cylinder, which serves to roll the cord on. In this manner these little wells or tubes are made quite perpendicular, and as polished as glass. Sometimes the ground is not rock all through, but beds of coal and other materials are found, and then the operation becomes more difficult, and sometimes even entirely useless; for, as these substances do not all offer equal resistance, it may happen that the well loses its perpendicularity; but these cases are rare. Sometimes the large iron ring that suspends the rammer breaks, and then five or six months' labour are needed before it is possible, with the help of other rammers, to break up the first and reduce it to a pulp. When the rock is good, the work advances at the rate of two feet in twenty-four hours, so that about three years are required to dig a well. To draw water from it, a tube of bamboo, twenty-four feet long, is put down, at the bottom of which there is a valve or sucker; when it has reached the bottom, a strong man sits on the rope, and shakes it, so that every shake opens the sucker, and makes the water rise. The tube being full, a great spindle-shaped cylinder of fifty feet in circumference, upon which the rope is wound, is worked by two, three, or four buffaloes, till it is drawn up. This rope also is made of rattan. These poor buffaloes, however, are very ill suited to this labour, and they die in great numbers. If the Chinese had our steam-engines, they would be able to perform the work at less cost, but thousands of working people would die of hunger.

"The water of these wells is very salt; it gives, on evaporation, one-fifth, or even sometimes one-fourth. The salt is also of very acrid quality, so much so as often to inflame the throat to a painful degree; and it is then necessary to make use of sea-salt, which is brought from Canton or Tonquin.

"The air that issues from these wells is highly inflammable. If when the tube full of water is near the top you were to present a torch at the opening, a great flame twenty or thirty feet in height would be kindled, which would burn the shed with the rapidity and explosion of gunpowder. This does happen sometimes through the imprudence of workmen, or in some cases from a malicious desire to commit suicide in company. There are some wells from which fire only, and no salt, is obtained; they are called *Ho-tsing*, fire-wells. A little tube of bamboo closes the opening of the well, and conducts the inflammable air to where it is required; it is

then kindled with a taper, and burns continually. The flame is of a bluish colour, three or four inches high, and one inch in diameter. Here the fire is not sufficient to boil the salt, but at about forty leagues off there are much larger fire-wells.

"To evaporate the water, and prepare the salt, they make use of large brass tubs, about five feet in diameter, and only four inches deep.

"The Chinese have found out that, in presenting a larger surface to the fire, the evaporation goes on more quickly and the fuel is economised. This tub, or cauldron, is surrounded by other deeper ones, containing water, which boils at the same fire, and serves to feed the large tub, so that the salt, when evaporated, completely fills the tub, and takes its form. The block of salt weighs two hundred pounds and upwards, and is as hard as stone; it has to be broken into three or four pieces for the purposes of commerce.

"The fire is so strong, that the cauldron becomes red hot, and the water throws up great bubbles to the height of eight or ten inches. When the fossil fire from the wells is made use of, the ebullition is still more violent, and the cauldron is calcined in a short time, although those employed in that case are three or four inches thick.

"For all these salt-wells great quantities of coal are consumed, and various kinds of it are found in the country; but the thickness of these beds of coal varies from only one inch to five. The subterranean path leading to the mine is so steep, that bamboo ladders are placed in it. The coal is in large pieces. The greater part of these mines contain much of the inflammable air of which I have spoken, and it is impossible to use lamps in them. The miners either grope about in the dark, or make a kind of light with resin and saw-dust, which burns without flame, and does not go out. When a salt-well has been dug to the depth of a thousand feet, a bituminous oil is found in it, that burns in water. Sometimes as many as four or five jars of a hundred pounds each are collected in a day. This oil is very fetid, but it is made use of to light the sheds in which are the wells and cauldrons of salt. The Mandarins, by order of the Prince, sometimes buy thousands of jars of it, in order to calcine rocks under water, that render the navigation perilous. When a shipwreck takes place, the people make a kind of lamp of this oil, which they throw into the water near the spot; and then a diver, and oftener still a thief, goes down to search for any article of value that he can carry away, the subaqueous lamp lighting him perfectly."

"If I knew a little more of physical science, I could tell you what this inflammable and subterraneous air of which I have spoken really is. I do not believe that it is produced by a subterranean volcano, because it needs to be kindled, and when kindled it never goes out, unless in a most violent gust of wind, without the tube being stopped up by a ball of clay. Showmen often fill bladders with it, and carry it about the country; they make a hole in the bladder with a needle and kindle it with a taper, to amuse simpletons. I believe that it is a gas, or spirit of bitumen, for the fire is very fetid and gives out a thick black smoke."*

"These coal mines and wells of salt afford occupation to large masses of the population, and there are some wealthy persons who have as many as a hundred wells belonging to them; but these colossal fortunes are soon dissipated. The father amasses, and the children spend all in gambling or debauchery.

"On the 6th of January, 1827, I arrived at *Tse-liou-tsing* (that is 'wells flowing of themselves'), after a march of eighteen leagues made in my thick shoes with iron nails an inch long, on account of the mud that renders the roads slippery.

"This little Christian community only contains thirty communicants; but I found there the most beautiful wonder of nature, and the greatest effort of human industry that I have met in all my travels—a subjugated volcano.

"The place is in the mountains, on the borders of a little river. It contains, like Ou-tong-kiao, salt-wells dug in the same manner, that is to say, with an iron rammer of three hundred pounds' weight. There are more than a thousand of these wells or tubes containing salt water; and, besides this, every well contains inflammable air, which is conducted through a bamboo tube, lit with a taper, and cannot be put out without vigorous blowing. When they wish to get the salt water, they extinguish the fire tube, for otherwise the inflammable air, coming up in great quantity with the water, would cause an explosion in the mine. In one valley there are four wells which yield fire in terrific quantities, and no water: that is doubtless the centre of the volcano. These wells at first yielded salt water: and the water having dried up, about twelve years ago another well was dug to a depth of three thousand feet and more, in the expectation of finding water in abundance. This hope was vain, but suddenly there issued from it an enormous column of air, filled with blackish

* This is no doubt what chemists call carburetted hydrogen.

particles. I saw it with my own eyes. It does not resemble smoke, but the vapour of a fiery furnace, and it escapes with a frightful roaring sound, that is heard far off. It blows and respires continually, but never inspires; but it is possible that its inspirations may be made in some lake, perhaps the great lake of Hou-kouang, two hundred leagues off. There is, on a mountain about a league off, a small lake, about half a league in circumference; but I cannot think that sufficient to feed the volcano. This little lake has no communication with the river, and is only fed with rain water.

"The opening of the well is surrounded by a wall of freestone, six or seven feet high, to guard against the well being set on fire by accident or malice, a misfortune which did really happen last August. The well is in the middle of an immense court, with large sheds in the centre, where the cauldrons are placed for the boiling of the salt; and on that occasion, as soon as the fire touched the surface of the well, there arose a terrific explosion, and a shock as of an earthquake, and at the same moment the whole surface of the court appeared in flames. These flames, however, though about two feet high, seemed to flutter over the surface of the ground without burning anything. Four men, with great self-devotion, went and rolled an enormous stone over the surface of the well, but it was thrown up again immediately into the air. Three of the men were killed; the fourth escaped; but neither water nor mud would extinguish the fire. At length, after fifteen days' labour, a sufficient quantity of water was collected on a neighbouring mountain, to form a large lake or reservoir, and this was let loose all at once upon the fire, by which means it was extinguished; but at a cost of thirty thousand francs, a large sum for China.

"At the depth of a foot below the ground, four enormous bamboo tubes are fixed in the four sides of the well, and these conduct the inflammable air beneath the cauldrons. More than three hundred are boiled by the fire from a single well, each of them being furnished with a bamboo tube, or fire conductor. On the top of the bamboo tube is one of clay, six inches long, with a hole in the centre six inches in diameter; this clay hinders the fire from burning the bamboo. Other tubes, carried outside, light the large sheds and the streets. There is such a supply of fire, that it cannot all be used; and the excess is carried by a tube, outside the enclosure of the salt works, into three chimneys, out of the tops of which the flame leaps to a height of two feet.

"The surface of the ground within the court is extremely hot,

and seems to burn under the feet; even in January the workmen are all half-naked, having nothing on but a short pair of drawers. I had, like other travellers, the curiosity to light my pipe at the fire of the volcano, and found it extremely active. The cauldrons here are four or five inches thick, and they are calcined and unfit for use at the end of a few months.

"The water is received through bamboo tubes into an enormous cistern; and a chain-pump, worked night and day by four men, forces it into an upper reservoir, whence it is conducted in tubes to feed the cauldrons. Four-and-twenty hours' evaporation produces a cake of salt six inches thick, and as hard as stone. This salt is whiter than that of *Ou-tong-kiao* and affects the throat less; possibly the coal employed at Ou-tong-kiao may make the difference, or it may be in the water itself. The latter contains a greater amount of salt than that of *Tse-liou-tsing;* it produces three or even four ounces of salt for every pound of water; but at Ou-tong-kiao the coal is dear, while at Tse-liou-tsing the fire costs nothing. These two districts have to sell their salt in different towns, and custom-house officers see that this arrangement, which has been approved by the government, is not disturbed.

"I forgot to tell you that this fire produces scarcely any smoke, but a strong bituminous vapour issues from it, which I could perceive at two leagues off. The flame is reddish, like that of coal; it does not seem to issue directly from the orifice of the tube, as that of a lamp might, but it begins about two inches above it, and then rises about two feet. In the winter the poor, to warm themselves, dig a round hole of a foot deep in the ground in which they place a handful of straw and set light to it, and a dozen of these poor creatures will then seat themselves round it. When they have warmed themselves sufficiently they fill up the hole with sand and the fire is put out."

From this account we may form some idea of the character of Chinese industry. The physical sciences are among them still in the elementary stage, and only cultivated with a view to immediate practical application; but the Chinese supply in some measure the place of knowledge by their most prodigious patience. It is remarkable that, with modes of proceeding so extremely simple and resources so limited, they are able to obtain results that would elsewhere require a considerable amount of science. Their turn of mind tends always to simplification; scientific machinery would only embarrass them, and they would perhaps not succeed so well; but with their sagacity and perseverance they contrive to effect the most difficult things. They take time for their

fulcrum and patience for their lever; these are the two great principles of Chinese physical science.

It is, nevertheless, true that a certain amount of this kind of knowledge has existed among the Chinese from the most remote antiquity, and has descended from generation to generation, sometimes in the form of a family secret, sometimes disseminated in a receipt book. With these very simple aids, they attain results that with us are only the fruits of science and study. Thus the Chinese are able to work mines, and to amalgamate metals and work them in all sorts of ways: they cast bells and statues in bronze and other metals; they manufacture enormous porcelain vases; they build towers, and construct on their rivers magnificent and remarkably solid bridges: they have dug a fine canal from one end of the Empire to the other. At two different epochs they have undertaken gigantic works of extreme difficulty, to change the course of the Yellow River; and they know how to produce all colours and combine them in a wonderful manner. We might pass in review all the products of their arts and industry, which have often a great deal of merit, and we should be compelled to acknowledge, that in China, as elsewhere, there are chemists, mathematicians, and natural philosophers.

Their systems, it is true, are not scientifically arranged and based upon fixed general principles. The Chinese would be unable to say according to what laws they obtain certain chemical combinations; they would content themselves with showing you some old receipt which, as experience has taught them, will attain the end in view. Their miners could not assuredly explain in a satisfactory manner why that combination of saw-dust and resin which they make use of for a light will not kindle the gas in the mines, and produce an explosion; but assuredly it answers for them the purpose of Davy's celebrated safety-lamp.

Although, however, scientific results may thus be obtained by them without science, yet the knowledge of the Chinese must always remain scattered and desultory. It is very difficult for them to make any progress, or indeed to avoid retrograding from the point already attained. Their decay in many departments has begun years ago, and they acknowledge that they could not now do many things that were easy to them in times past. The natural sciences have no part whatever in their system of instruction, and since the knowledge slowly gathered from experience during a long course of ages has no other guardians, for the most part, than ignorant workmen, many very useful and important ideas are unavoidably lost. A more intimate relation with Europe

can alone preserve from perishing many of these precious germs, which may one day develope themselves under the influence of modern science.

Sse-tchouen, the most remarkable, in our opinion, of the eighteen provinces of China, is also that in which Christianity is the most flourishing. It counts nearly a hundred thousand Christians, mostly zealous and faithful in the fulfilment of their duties ; their numbers also are obviously on the increase from year to year.

The prosperity of this mission arises from its never having been entirely abandoned like many others. At the period even of our most disastrous revolutions, whilst France herself, without priest and without a worship, could hardly be supposed to occupy herself with the religious interests of China, the Christians of Sse-tchouen still had the happiness of retaining in the midst of them apostles full of zeal and fervour, who watched with care over the precious sparks of faith, whilst waiting till better times should permit new missionaries to come and revive the sacred fire of religion in those countries. The province of Sse-tchouen has now been entrusted to the care of the Society of Foreign Missions, which is gathering the fruits of its zeal and perseverance.

The Christian community of Sse-tchouen, besides being the most numerous in China, presents also some peculiar features. Everywhere else * the neophytes, in town and country, have been mostly recruited from amongst the most indigent classes ; but it has not been thus in Sse-tchouen ; for, although the propagation of the faith has not yet reached the summit of society, the greater number of Christians are found in its middle ranks.

Of course, in a religious point of view, the poor are at least of as much consequence as the rich, and we must not forget that shepherds came before kings, to adore the Saviour of the world in His manger ; but it happens that many of the Chinese are simple enough to believe that a certain sum is always given to catechumens on the day of their baptism, and that people thus become Christians from motives of worldly interest. It is advantageous, therefore, to do away with this idea, and let them see that Christianity is professed by people in easy circumstances, who have no need of alms. It is also well that the missions should be self-supporting, and be able to found schools and build chapels for themselves.

Sometimes, it is true, the prosperity of the missions has this disadvantage, that it tends to excite the cupidity of the Mandarins,

* The province of Kiang-nan must be excepted.

who are willing enough to let the poor alone, but keep up a most watchful superintendence over those houses where there is anything to take. On the whole, however, the balance of advantage may be said to be on the side of prosperity in the missions.

The families may, by uniting their strength, obtain a certain amount of influence, intimidate the satellites, and compel the Mandarins to spare them; for in China, in order to make yourself respected, it is sufficient to take a formidable attitude. In traversing the province of Sse-tchouen, we remarked that the Christians appeared to enjoy a greater amount of liberty than elsewhere; or at least make greater efforts to assert their claim to what has been granted them. They venture to assemble and proclaim publicly that they are Christians. One day we saw a number of them in their Sunday clothes, walking in procession with a banner at their head, to the celebration of a festival in a neighbouring village; and it was Ting himself who pointed out the fact to our observation.

We are persuaded that if all the Christians of China stood on the same footing as those of Sse-tchouen, it would not be so easy as it has been to subject them to persecution.

CHAP. VIII.

Arrival at Pa-toung, a frontier Town of Hou-pé. — Literary Examinations. — Character of the Chinese Bachelor. — Condition of Writers. — Written Language. — Spoken Language. — Glance at Chinese Literature. — The Celestial Empire an immense Library. — Study of Chinese in Europe. — Embarkation on the Blue River. — Salt Custom-house. — Smuggling Mandarin. — Dispute with the Prefect of I-tchang-fou. — A Mandarin wishes to put us in Chains. — System of Customs in China. — I-tou-hien, a Town of the Third Class. — Amiable and interesting Magistrate of that Town. — Geographical Knowledge of the Chinese. — Narrative of an Arab who travelled in China in the ninth century before the Christian Era.

After leaving Sse-tchouen behind us, a few hours' march brought us to *Pa-toung*, a little town of *Hou-pé*. Although we were now no longer in the country subject to the jurisdiction of the Viceroy Pao-hing, we were received as we had been in all the towns of Sse-tchouen; for the orders that had been given respecting us were to remain in force till we should arrive at *Ou-tchang-fou*, the capital of Hou-pé. The authorities of Pa-toung treated us there with the accustomed ceremony; but scarcely had we reached it before we noticed the most complete and extraordinary change

in the tone and manner of the people of our escort. Mandarins, satellites and soldiers — all appeared metamorphosed with that elastic suppleness which is the most striking feature in the Chinese character. They had all at once become peaceable and modest to a degree that was really admirable. The reason of this was, that they had now entered what they regarded in some measure as a foreign country, and they had left all their domineering pride on the frontiers of their own province, of course with the full intention of resuming it when they went back. For the present, however, their business was to avoid compromising themselves, and "draw in their hearts" so as to continue their journey in safety.

The Viceroy of Sse-tchouen had warned us that, in the province of Hou-pé, the communal palaces were few in number, and not convenient for us. At Pa-toung we found none at all, but we lost little by that, for we went to lodge in the *Kao-pan*, that is to say, "the Institution." The Kao-pan, or theatre of examinations, is, like the wen-tchang-koun, a palace of literary composition, an edifice belonging to the learned corporation. That of Pa-toung had nothing remarkable in its construction, but as it was exquisitely clean and had vast apartments, it was fresh and cool. The examinations had taken place only a few days before, and we found the various decorations still arranged as for the ceremony. In the evening we had visits from a crowd of the literary personages, amongst whom were several who we must own appeared to us exceedingly stupid.

This literary corporation was organised as early as the eleventh century before the Christian era, but the system of examinations existing at present does not date farther back than the eighth century before the commencement of the great dynasty of Tang. Before this epoch the magistrates were elected by the people; but at present, as we have said, universal suffrage has been preserved only in the communes, in the election of the mayors, who bear the name of *ti-pao* in the south, and of *sian-yo* in the north of the Empire.

The literary examinations are, like everything else, degenerating and sinking to decay. They have no longer the grave, earnest, impartial character that was doubtless impressed on them at the time of their institution. The corruption which has spread through everything without exception in China has also found its way among both examiners and examined. The rules that ought to be observed in the examinations are extremely stringent, with a view to prevent any kind of fraud, and discover the true merit of the candidate; but, by certain financial methods,

a way has been found to neutralise the effect of these precautions. A rich man can always find out beforehand the subjects proposed for the various compositions; and, what is worse, even the suffrages of the judges are sold to the highest bidder.

A student who knows he is not capable of going through the examination, or who has not been able to procure the programme of the questions, coolly goes with a certain sum in his hand to some poor graduate who has the requisite ability, and who merely takes the name of the candidate for honours, assumes his place, and brings him back the diploma. It is a regular branch of industry, which is carried on almost publicly in China; and the Chinese, in their picturesque language, have given to the gentlemen who have obtained their degree in this fashion, the name of crupper bachelors.

The number of bachelors is very considerable; but, for want of resources, pecuniary as well as intellectual, there are very few who attain to the higher degrees, which fit them for public offices. Those who are in easy circumstances, however, may at least enjoy the incomparable happiness of wearing a gilt ball in their caps. They are fond of public ceremonials, parades, and assemblies, at which they may display their pretensions. Sometimes, too, they occupy their leisure with literature, and compose novels or pieces of poetry, which they read to their colleagues, and receive plenty of compliments, of course on conditions of reciprocity. Poor literary graduates, who hold no public office, form in the Empire a class apart, and lead a kind of life that it is difficult to describe. Real laborious work is not at all accordant to their tastes and habits. To occupy themselves with industry, commerce or agriculture, would be much beneath their dignity. Those who wish in earnest to gain a livelihood become schoolmasters or doctors, or endeavour to fill some subaltern office in the tribunals; others become mere adventurers, and live on the public in various ways. Those who live in the large towns have very much the aspect of ruined gentlemen, and they have little other resource than to visit and bore each other at their common expense, or arrange plans to avoid dying of hunger. Very often they contrive to extort money from the rich and the Mandarins, who having always plenty of administrative sins upon their consciences, do not care to have for enemies a set of idle, hungry bachelors, always ready to weave some intrigue or lay a trap for the man in office. Lawsuits are also a grand resource for this useful class of society. They apply themselves assiduously to fomenting quarrels, and embittering the parties against each other; and then they under-

take for a certain little reasonable consideration to appease and reconcile them, or, as they say in their language, to give them some commentaries on law. Those whose imaginations are not sufficiently lively and fertile to suggest all these modes of industry, endeavour to live by their pens, which they manage with admirable skill. They drive a little trade in sentences finely written on strips of coloured paper, such as the Chinese consume in large quantities for the decoration of their doors and the interior of their apartments. It is almost superfluous to add, that these literary geniuses, "*incompris*" of the Celestial Empire, are also the agents of secret societies, and the agitators in times of revolution. The proclamation, the placard, and the pamphlet, are weapons that they know how to manage just as well as their brethren of the West.

Although literature is in China very much encouraged by the government, and by public opinion, this encouragement does not proceed so far as to afford an income to its professors. Nobody here makes a fortune by writing books; more especially such books as novels, romances, and poetry or dramatic pieces. However good these may be, very little value is attached to them. Those who are capable of appreciating them read them of course, but merely as an amusement. No one thinks of the author, who indeed on his side never dreams of putting his name to his productions. People in China read very much as they take a walk in a garden, for the sake of a momentary recreation; they admire the trees, the verdure, the splendour and variety of the flowers, but all this without ever thinking of the gardener, much less asking his name.

The Chinese are full of veneration for "sacred and classical books," and their esteem for great works on history and morals is in some measure a religion with them, the only one perhaps that they profess seriously; for they are accustomed to consider literature from the point of view of serious utility. The class whom we call authors are in their eyes only idle persons who pass their time in amusing themselves by making prose or verse. They have no objection to such a pursuit. A man may, they say, "amuse himself with his pen as with his kite, if he likes it as well—it is all a matter of taste."

The inhabitants of the Celestial Empire would never recover from their astonishment if they knew to what extent a work of this kind may be in Europe a source of honour and often of wealth. If they were told that any one may obtain great glory among us by composing a drama or a romance, they would either not believe

it or set it down as an additional proof of our well-known want of common sense. How would it be if they should be told of the renown of a dancer or a violin player, and that one cannot make a bound, or the other draw a bow anywhere, without thousands of newspapers hastening to spread the important news over all the kingdoms of Europe!

The Chinese are too decided utilitarians to enter into our views of the arts. In their opinion a man is only worthy of the admiration of his fellow-creatures when he has well fulfilled the social duties, and especially if he knows better than any one else how to get out of a scrape.

You are regarded as a man of genius if you know how to regulate your family, make your lands fruitful, traffic with ability, and realise great profits. This at least is the only kind of genius that is of any value in the eyes of these eminently practical men.

In a preceding chapter we endeavoured to give an idea of the system of instruction adopted in China; and since we are now at the Kao-pan it will be a good opportunity for completing the survey, by casting a glance over the Chinese language and literature, concerning which many very inaccurate ideas prevail.

"A curious and frequent contrast," says M. Abel Rémusat, "is presented by the lively curiosity with which we inquire into all that relates to the manners, the character and the creed of Oriental nations, and the profound indifference with which the Asiatics regard our intellectual progress, our institutions, and even the masterpieces of our industry. It seems that we have always need of others, and that the Asiatics alone suffice to themselves. The Europeans, so disdainful, so proud of the progress they have made in the arts and sciences, during these three hundred years, are continually asking what is thought and felt by men whom they regard as so far inferior to them in every respect. The Asiatics care nothing about what the Europeans think; whether they think at all, or whether they exist at all. In Paris and in London there are many people studying Oriental literature; at Teheran or Pekin nobody knows whether the West has a literature or not. The Asiatics do not dream of contesting our intellectual superiority; they simply ignore it, and never trouble themselves about it, which is incomparably more mortifying for men so much inclined to value themselves upon it as we are."

In Europe, in France and England especially, a lively interest has been felt now for some years in all that passes in the Celestial Empire. All that comes from this country excites curiosity; and we are determined to make acquaintance with the eccentric nation, which is so bent on living by itself in the world.

Now, it seems to us, that the primary cause of the eccentric character of this people is to be found in the extraordinary character of their language. It is most emphatically true of the Chinese that the literature is the expression of society.

That which distinguishes the Chinese language from all others, is its surprising originality, its great antiquity, its immutability, and, above all, its prodigious extension over the most populous countries of Asia. Of all the primitive languages, not only is it the only one still spoken in our own day, but it is also the most in use of all living modes of speech. Chinese, with various modifications, is spoken in the eighteen provinces of the Empire, in Mantchooria, Corea, Japan, Cochin China, Tonquin, and several islands of the Straits of Sunda. It is unquestionably the language the most widely diffused throughout the world, and that which transmits the ideas of the greatest number of men.

The Chinese language is divided into two quite distinct parts, the written and the spoken. The written language is not composed of letters combined together for the formation of words; it is not alphabetical; it is a collection of an immense number of written characters, more or less complicated, of which each expresses a word and represents an idea or an object. The primitive characters used by the Chinese were signs or rather coarse drawings, which imperfectly represented material objects.

These primitive characters were two hundred and fourteen in number. There were some for the heavens; others for the earth and for man; the parts of the body; domestic animals, such as the dog, the horse, the ox; for plants, trees, quadrupeds, birds, fish, metals, &c. Since this first invention of Chinese writing, the forms of these coarse paintings have been changed; but, instead of improving, they have corrupted them; only the primitive strokes have been preserved, and it is with this small number of figures that the Chinese have composed all their characters and found means to satisfy the numerous requirements of their civilisation.

The first Chinese must have soon discovered the insufficiency of their two hundred and fourteen primitive signs; by degrees, as society advanced and the circle of their knowledge enlarged, new wants must have made themselves felt, the number of characters had necessarily to be increased; and for that a new method adopted, for it would not do to have a number of new figures that, as they were multiplied, would be confounded together. How with these rude sketches could it be possible to distinguish a dog from a wolf or a fox; an oak from an apple or tea tree? How especially would it be possible to express human passions, anger, love, and pity, abstract ideas, and operations of the mind?

In the midst of these difficulties there does not seem to have been at any time an idea of introducing an alphabetical, or even syllabic system; the Chinese could obtain no knowledge of such a one among the barbarous and illiterate nations by whom they were surrounded; and, besides, they have always had the highest opinion of their written language, regarding it as a celestial invention, the principle of which was revealed to *Fou-hi*, the founder of their nationality. They were forced, therefore, to have recourse to combinations of the primitive figures; and by this means they formed an immense multitude of signs, composed for the most part arbitrarily, but which sometimes present ingenious symbols, lively and picturesque definitions, and enigmas, the more interesting as the solution has not been lost. Natural objects, and many others which can be assimilated to them, are all classed under the animal, tree, or plant, which was the type of them in the hundred and fourteen primitive characters; the wolf, the fox, the ram, and the other carnivora, were referred to the dogs; the various species of goats and antelopes, to the sheep; the deer, the roebuck, and the animal that produces musk, to the stag; the other ruminants, to the ox; the *rodentia*, to the rat; the *pachydermata*, to the pig; the hoofed, to the horse. The name of every creature is thus composed of two parts; one relating to the kind, the other determining the species by a sign indicative either of the peculiarities of conformation, the habits of the animal, or the use that may be made of it. By this ingenious method are formed real natural families, which, with the exception of a few anomalies, might be acknowledged by modern naturalists.

With respect to abstract ideas and acts of the understanding the difficulty was greater; but it was not less ingeniously met. To paint anger, they make a heart surmounted by the sign of a slave; a hand holding the symbol of the middle designates the historian, whose first duty it is to incline to neither side; the character signifying straightness and also that of walking represented the government, which should be rectitude itself in action; to express the idea of a friend, they placed two pearls, one beside the other, because it is so difficult to find two pearls exactly matching one another. For many of the words the figure is entirely arbitrary; but there are great numbers of which the analysis would be very interesting. The ancient missionaries mention several; but they are far from having exhausted the subject, or even studied it under its most curious relations. It would be impossible to calculate the traditions, the allusions, the unexpected analogies, the picturesque and epigrammatic features which are thus enclosed in these characters;

and it is incredible what light would be thrown on the ancient moral and philosophical opinions of the primitive nations of Oriental Asia by studying carefully, while guarding against too hasty theorising, these symbolical expressions; in which they have painted unconsciously, themselves, their manners, and the whole order of things under which they have lived, and with which history has made us so imperfectly acquainted, since they date from a time when history was not.

Chinese characters were at first traced with a metallic point upon little bamboo tablets; and it was with a view of facilitating their execution, that by degrees the primitive form was modified, until the figurative type was almost lost. The stiffness of their strokes also was much softened three centuries before our era, after two important discoveries; the art of making paper with the bark of the mulberry or bamboo, and the not less precious one of preparing the substance we call Indian ink. The small brush or pencil then took the place of the metallic graver, successive modifications were again introduced in the figure, till at last they arrived at the present character, formed from the combination of a certain number of strokes, either straight or slightly curved.

Chinese writing is at first sight disagreeable, from its strangeness; but when one is accustomed to it one soon begins to think it pretty and even graceful. All these characters firmly drawn with a pencil acquire a degree of delicacy and beauty; a really good Chinese handwriting is both graceful and bold; and the slender, bony fingers of the Chinese manœuvre their pencils with surprising dexterity. They write their characters one above another in a vertical line; and this arrangement does not allow the reader to see the whole phrase at once, as in horizontal writing: they begin their lines by the right of the page; in a word, they proceed in exactly the contrary way to the European. The number of characters successively introduced by the combination of strokes amounts to thirty or forty thousand in the Chinese dictionaries; but two-thirds of these are seldom used, and, by cutting off the synonyms, five or six thousand characters, with their various significations, would amply suffice to understand all original texts.

It has been said, and repeated over and over again, that the Chinese pass their lives in learning to read, and that even the old learned men depart this life without having accomplished the difficult enterprise. The notion is amusing, but fortunately for the Chinese very incorrect.

If to know a language it were necessary to know every word in

it, how many Frenchmen would be able to boast of being acquainted with their native tongue? How many people are familiar with the innumerable technical phrases that fill up the greater part of our dictionaries? It has been imagined and asserted in very serious works that Chinese writing is purely ideographic. This is an error. It is ideographic and phonetic at the same time; but as the demonstration of the truth could not very well be made intelligible to those who have not a considerable knowledge of the mechanism of the language, we will content ourselves with giving one proof that will be understood by all.

The Chinese characters are so far phonetic, that in all our missions those who learn to serve the mass have for their use a little book in which the Latin prayers are written out in Chinese characters. How could that be if they were simply ideographic? How could they render and express exactly the sounds of our European language?

In the Pagoda Libraries, what are the greater part of the books of prayer that the Buddhist priests have to learn from one end to the other, but Chinese transcriptions of Sanscrit books? The Bonzes study them, and repeat them without at all comprehending their meaning, because by means of these so-called *ideographic* characters they have translated the sound without the sense. It may be said, that every Chinese character is composed of two elements, which may in general be easily distinguished, one ideographic, the other phonographic. Is not this the case with all writing? It belongs to philologists and not to us to determine these questions?

The Chinese in their written language have three distinctions of style: the antique or sublime style, the type of which is to be found in the ancient literary monuments, and which exhibits very rare grammatical forms; the common or vulgar style, remarkable for a great number of ligatures, and the employment of words composed to avoid homophony and facilitate conversation; and, finally, the academic style, which partakes of the two preceding, being less concise than the antique, and less prolix than the vulgar. A profound acquaintance with the antique style is necessary for reading the ancient books; and in general all the works that treat of historical, political, or scientific subjects, since they are always written in a style that approaches the antique. The vulgar style is employed for light productions, theatrical pieces, private letters, and proclamations intended to be read aloud.

The spoken language is composed of a limited number of mono-

syllabic intonations; namely, four hundred and fifty, which by the very subtle variation of the accents are multiplied to about sixteen hundred. It results from this that all Chinese words are necessarily grouped in homophonous series, whence a great number of double meanings may arise either in reading or speaking; but this difficulty is avoided by coupling synonymous or antithetic words. In this manner the ambiguities disappear, and the conversation is no longer embarrassed.

The language called *Houan-hoa*, that is to say, common universal language, is that which the Europeans wrongfully designate by the name of Mandarin language, as if it were exclusively reserved for the Mandarins or functionaries of government.

The Houan-hoa is the language spoken by all instructed persons throughout the eighteen provinces of the Empire, and in this a distinction is made between the language of the north and that of the south. The first is that of Pekin; it is marked by a more frequent and sensible use of the guttural or aspirate accent. It is spoken in all the provincial government offices; the officers of which affect to imitate the pronunciation of the capital, which in China, as elsewhere, is regarded as the regulator of propriety of language.

The common language of the south is that of the inhabitants of Nankin, who cannot give utterance to the guttural accent, like those of the north; but whose more flexible voices give the varieties of intonation with greater accuracy. Very likely when Nankin was the capital of the Empire* its pronunciation was the most esteemed.

Besides the two subdivisions of the universal, or, as the Europeans say, the Mandarin language, there exist in the various provinces of China particular local idioms or *patois*, in which the pronunciation differs much from that of the universal language. It happens sometimes that one side of a river does not understand the other; but, as it is only on account of difference of pronunciation, recourse can always be had to writing. There are also, in addition to these *patois*, dialects peculiar to the provinces of *Kouang-tong* and *Fo-kien*.

The literature of China is certainly the first in Asia, by the importance of its monuments, the number of which is prodigious. Some estimate may be formed of it by the catalogue of the Imperial Library of Pekin, which contains 12,000 titles of works with tables of contents. In the principal catalogues Chinese

* Pekin means court of the north, and Nankin that of the south.

literature is divided into four great sections. The first is that of sacred or classical books, of which we have already spoken in a preceding chapter. The second is of those on history. The Chinese count, on the whole, twenty-four complete histories of the different dynasties anterior to the Mantchoo, without counting chronicles and memoirs.

The first great collection of ancient historical monuments in China and the neighbouring countries is due to the celebrated *Sse-ma-tsien*, an Imperial historian of the first century before our era. It is composed of 130 books, divided into five parts. The first comprehends the fundamental chronicle of the Emperors; the second consists of chronological canons; the third treats of the rites of music and astronomy, the division of time, &c.; the fourth contains biographies of all the families which have been possessors of principalities; and the last, which is composed of seventy books, is devoted to memoirs concerning foreign countries and biographies of illustrious men.

In the middle of the eleventh century, Sse-ma-kouang, whose Poetic Garden we have already mentioned, edited a complete series of annals from the eighth century before Christ to the year 960, the date of the accession of the dynasty of Song, under which he lived. Father de Mailla has given a translation of them under the title of General History of China, continuing it also to the first Emperor of the Mantchoo dynasty.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century *Ma-touan-lin* published his celebrated historical encyclopædia, entitled Profound Researches into Ancient Documents of every Kind.

This famous historian does not content himself with registering documents; he discusses and explains them, and his work is the richest mine that can be consulted upon all that relates to government, political economy, commerce, agriculture, scientific history, geography, and ethnography.

The third section is that of special works relating to the arts and sciences. It comprises, first, moral treatises, the familiar dialogues of Confucius, the elementary lessons and conversation of the celebrated Tchu-hi, treatises on the passions and on the education both of men and women; secondly, works on the military art; thirdly, special treatises on the penal laws; fourthly, on agriculture and the management of the silk-worm; fifthly, on medicine and natural history, comprehending the descriptions of animals, vegetables, and minerals; sixthly, practical treatises on astronomy and mathematics; seventhly, on the science of divination; eighthly, on the liberal arts, namely, painting, writing, music, and the art of

drawing the bow; ninthly, essays on the coining of money, on making ink, and the preparation of tea; tenthly, general encyclopædias, with illustrations; elevently, works descriptive and illustrative of ancient and modern nations; twelfthly, treatises on the Buddhist religion; thirteenthly, numerous treatises by adepts of the sect of Tao; fourteenthly, mythological works.

The fourth and last section comprehends works of light literature, such as poetry, the drama, romances, and novels.

In China there are not, as in Europe, public libraries and reading-rooms; but those who have a taste for reading and a desire to instruct themselves, can satisfy their inclinations very easily, as books are sold here at a lower price than in any other country. Besides, the Chinese find everywhere something to read; they can scarcely take a step without seeing some of the characters of which they are so proud. One may say, in fact, that all China is an immense library; for inscriptions, sentences, moral precepts, are found in every corner written in letters of all colours and all sizes. The façades of the tribunals, the pagodas, the public monuments, the signs of the shops, the doors of houses, the interior of the apartments, the corridors, all are full of fine quotations from the best authors. Tea-cups, plates, vases, fans, are so many selections of poems, often chosen with much taste, and prettily printed. A Chinese has no need to give himself much trouble in order to enjoy the finest productions of his country's literature. He need only take his pipe and walk out, with his nose in the air, through the principal streets of the first town he comes to. Let him enter the poorest house in the most wretched village; the destitution will often be complete, things the most necessary will be wanting; but he is sure of finding some fine maxims written out on strips of red paper. Thus, if those grand large characters, which look so terrific in our eyes, though they delight the Chinese, are really so difficult to learn, at least the people have the most ample opportunities of studying them, almost in play, and of impressing them ineffaceably on their memories.

The study of Chinese was long regarded in Europe as a thing extremely difficult, if not impossible. Who, indeed, with the conviction that the Chinese themselves could not succeed in learning properly to read, would have been willing to engage in so hopeless an enterprise? But the prejudice has at last been overcome, and philologists have found out that Chinese may be learned as easily as other foreign languages. M. Abel Rémusat is perhaps the first who had the resolution to attempt in earnest to conquer the obstacles which seemed to forbid access to it; but when this learned

Orientalist had in some measure smoothed the way, and shown by his example that it was possible to acquire a knowledge of the language of Confucius, many learned men threw themselves eagerly into the route that he had pointed out, and at present there may be counted in Europe several distinguished Chinese scholars; at the head of whom stands M. Stanislas Julien, who has attained to so thorough a knowledge of this language, that we are persuaded very few, even of the Chinese themselves, are equally capable of understanding the more abstruse productions of their literature.

With respect to the spoken language, Chinese does not present as many impediments and difficulties as many of the languages of Europe.

The pronunciation alone requires some pains, especially in the beginning; but by degrees you become familiar with the exigencies of accents and aspirates, especially when you live in the country, and have no intercourse with any but natives. In making these few remarks on the Chinese language, we have thought that we should probably meet the wishes of our readers; but it is now time to resume our itinerary.

Master Ting had often predicted to us, that when we reached Hou-pé we should look back with regret on Sse-tchouen. We should, he said, find the inhabitants coarse in their manners, unobservant of the Rites, and speaking an unintelligible language. Then the roads were detestable; there was seldom a Communal Palace to be met with, but in its place only a very bad inn. Our first halt at Pa-toung, however, by no means justified these sombre previsions. We were in the province of Hou-pé, and we found ourselves just as well off as before. We were treated with civility, and the Kao-pan, or Theatre of Examinations, which served us for a lodging, was certainly as good as a Communal Palace. We had, nevertheless, gathered some information on the road that was by no means agreeable; the Mandarins and literary men whom we met were unanimous in declaring that we should find the journey from this stage toilsome and difficult; that the roads were badly kept, and that we should find no good palanquin bearers. All this proceeded from the proximity of the Blue River. The navigation of that river, they said, was so cheap and easy, that both travellers and merchandise generally went by water; and although always on our guard against the deceit and falsehood of the Chinese, their arguments this time appeared plausible enough; and it was agreed that we should follow the course of the river as long as possible; on condition, however, of landing every evening, and passing the night at the towns previously marked out for our halts.

The first night after leaving Pa-tòung we stopped at *Kouei-tcheou*, where, except a good deal of commercial bustle in the port, we found nothing remarkable. The next day we embarked very early; and our escort was increased by the addition of a military officer and some soldiers, to protect us, it was said, against the pirates. We passed without accident a place dangerous from its numerous reefs; some of the last met with on this fine river, which beyond this place goes on increasing from day to day, and spreading richness and fertility around it. There is certainly no one in the world to be compared with it for the multitude of men whom it feeds, and the prodigious number of vessels that it bears on its waters. Nothing can be more grand and majestic than the development of this river during its course of 1980 miles. At *Tchoung-king*, 900 miles from the sea, it is already a mile and a half broad; at its mouth it is no less than twenty-one.

Before we reached I-tchang-fou, a town of the first class, we passed a little custom-house for the salt duties, and our boats had to stop for the visit of the officers. We thought it rather strange that Mandarins' boats should be subjected to these visits; but Master Ting assured us it was all according to rule. "These visits," he said, "are on account of the crews of the boats, who sometimes profit by the presence of public functionaries to do a great deal of smuggling; you must, therefore, resign yourselves and have patience."

We resigned ourselves therefore, and had patience accordingly. The custom-house officers first visited the boat in which the soldiers were; and, having found in it no more salt than was necessary for culinary purposes, allowed it to set sail again and continue its passage.

Afterwards, they came on board of ours; and, when they had politely saluted the passengers, they requested the master of the vessel to take them down into the hold. "The hold!" he exclaimed, with an air of the utmost astonishment; "you would spoil your fine clothes. I have ballasted my vessel with mud, and you know very well that when one carries Mandarins one does not carry merchandise."

"Who knows?" cried the little military Mandarin whom we took up at Kouei-tcheou; "perhaps these two noble Europeans come here to smuggle salt;" and then he applauded his own wit by a shout of laughter. The officers, however, did not allow themselves to be disconcerted by this hilarity, but quietly began their search; and shortly afterwards we heard a tremendous uproar. There in the hold, sure enough, had been found, not mud, but a considerable

cargo of salt! and the chief smuggler was no other than the said military Mandarin who had been put on board to protect us against pirates. The affair now became serious: an embargo was immediately laid on the vessel, and every one on board became compromised. Every one, therefore, master, sailors, custom-house officers, Mandarins, and our intrepid smuggler with the gilt ball, began to vociferate at once. We were the only listeners; but it was by no means easy to make out what any one was saying. All we could understand was, that the sailors were exclaiming against the skipper, the skipper against the smuggler, the smuggler and the custom-house officers against everybody else. Master Ting was perfectly sublime in his wrath; he rushed from one to the other, bawling and gesticulating vehemently, but without seeming to know or care whether any one listened to him. When and how was all this to finish? That was what we were trying to find out, but we could not succeed.

During this inconceivable uproar the vessel of course was standing still. It was already late, and it appeared we should not get to the port, though it was but a little way off. To wait till all parties were agreed was evidently out of the question; and we saw no other resource than to throw ourselves into the *mêlée*. We seized, therefore, upon Master Ting, the custom-house officers, and the smuggler, and drove them before us down the ladder in our cabin. As soon as we had secured our men, we forbad them to say another word about salt. The boat, we said, had been hired to take us—*us* to I-tchang-fou. We had already been subjected to a long delay, and it mattered to us very little whose fault it was, we should make them all responsible. "Let us set off again," we said; "and when you are once in port, you may take as long as you like to settle your quarrel." They were about to recommence their explanations; but one of us kept them blockaded in the between decks, while the other went up and gave orders to the master to set sail again; and he did so, carrying with him the custom-house officers in despair at leaving their station.

As soon as we had reached the port, we hastened to effect our disembarkation, leaving the salt question to be discussed by those whose business it was. It was almost dark when we entered the town of I-tchang-fou. We had for a guide a very ill-looking fellow, whom the Prefect had sent to meet us on the shore, and who took us to what he called a Communal Palace. In this fine large town of the first class they could find for two Frenchmen travelling under the protection of the Son of Heaven no better

lodging than a damp hole, without doors, windows, or furniture, and already serving as a barrack to legions of rats, whose noise and foul odour made us shudder. We restrained our indignation; for what was the use of saying anything to that man, who doubtless had done nothing but obey orders?

After having, with the aid of a lantern, attentively inspected this pretended Communal Palace, we gave orders to carry ourselves and our baggage immediately to the Prefect's Tribunal. We were introduced there into a great hall, where we hastened to have our palanquins deposited and our trunks arranged, giving our servant Wei-chan to understand that he might set up his little *ménage* in a corner. Whilst we were quietly occupied with these arrangements the people of the tribunal went and came perpetually; but without ever addressing a word to us, and merely interrogating Master Ting, who replied always by a series of little cringes, but without saying a word, for fear of compromising himself either with us, or the authorities of the place. At last the Hall of Guests was opened, and the Prefect entered at one end and we at another; and after having reciprocally performed some profound salutations, we went and sat down on the divan. Directly afterwards, tea and some fine slices of water-melon were served. The conversation did not get on very well; but fortunately we could get over part of the embarrassment by busying ourselves, the Prefect with his tea, and we with our melon.

The magistrate of I-tchang-fou perceiving that we manifested a decided taste for this refreshing fruit, endeavoured to make use of it as a bait to entice us away from his house, and make us go and lodge where he had intended to put us. "This fruit is excellent in this warm weather," said he. "Delicious," said we. "I am going to select two," he continued, "which I will send for you to the Communal Palace. You have seen it, I suppose; I gave orders to have you taken there."

"We were taken to a damp dilapidated place, swarming with rats; we could not lodge there."

"Yes, I have been told it was not very dry; but that's an advantage in summer — the damp keeps it cool. Besides, it is the best place we have for guests. I-tchang-fou is a great town, it is true, but it is very poor; there are no good lodgings in it; you may ask the people here."

"We never said I-tchang-fou was not a poor town; we are persuaded it is; we only said we could not lodge there."

"In that case," said the Prefect, sulkily, "will you lodge in my house?"

Since he had had the politeness to invite us to remain, we ought, according to the Rites, to have had the politeness to go immediately; but we were not Chinese.

"Yes, thank you," we replied; "we shall be very comfortable here;" and then we complimented with great prodigality of expression the beauty and magnificence of his tribunal. The Prefect now rose, saying that it was late, and that it would be necessary to prepare our beds. He added, with a bow, that we had done him great honour in not disdaining to lodge in his miserable habitation; but we saw in his face that he was furious.

As soon as he had gone, we established ourselves very commodiously in a large room, next to the Hall of Reception; and the first part of the night was passed very peaceably: but not so the last; towards midnight we were awakened by a noisy conversation. The functionaries of I-tchang-fou, who probably had also been supping at the tribunal, had gone afterwards into the saloon which was next our chamber; and there they did not hesitate to criticise us very freely. The smallest details of this piquant conversation were distinctly audible to us. They analysed us completely, morally and physically. Some had the charity to consider us as endurable, and not to say too much against us; others said that we had not been long enough in the Central Kingdom to become acquainted with the Rites, and that it was easy to see in us the signs of the bad education people get in the West. There was one who appeared especially excited against us, and did all he could to bring his comrades to his own way of thinking; so that, if they had listened to him, our journey would not have been continued in a very agreeable manner.

"They are treating these people a great deal too well," said he; "they pretend that the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen treated them with distinction; but in my opinion he was quite in the wrong; he would have done much better to put a cangue upon them. These men who go wandering about out of their own country ought to be punished. They must be treated with severity. That's the way! If our Prefect was not afraid of them, they would be more obedient. Let him only put them into my hands and you shall see. I will load them with chains, and take them in that way to Canton." We thought we recognised the voice of the gentleman who promised us these little favours. It was a military Mandarin, who had been boasting with much pride and arrogance of having been in the war against the English, and of having seen the western devils near enough not to be afraid of them.

The talk of this person, to say the truth, annoyed us. There

was certainly no cause to fear; we were in favour with the Government, and no one probably would venture to lay hands on us; nevertheless, we had still a long way to go, and they might occasion us a great deal of trouble. It was well to be on our guard, not certainly by "making our hearts small" in the Chinese fashion; but, on the contrary, by enlarging them. We got up, therefore, very quietly; and, after having put on our robes of state, abruptly opened the door, and bounced out upon our fiery warrior. "Here we are," we said; "go and fetch your chains; since that is the way you mean to take us to Canton, you shall do so immediately; go and fetch them, do you hear?" Our sudden appearance disconcerted the conspirators; but we pursued our future conductor, roaring to him to go for his chains, while for every step we made forward he drew one back. At last we fairly drove him into a corner of the room, looking terribly frightened. "But," stammered he, "I don't understand what all this is about. Who wishes to chain you? Who could have the right to do so?" — "You, of course; you said so just now, we heard you. Chain us then directly, if you like." — "I do not understand, I do not understand," still repeated the valiant Mandarin. "Nobody here ever said such a word. How could we think of such a thing as chaining you? Are we not here to serve you?"

By degrees the rest of the company began to join in the conversation, every one protesting that what we had ourselves heard had never been spoken. That was all we wanted. Our *sortie* had been as successful as we could desire, and we now returned to our room, convinced that we need not make ourselves at all uneasy about the braggings of the Mandarins of I-tchang-fou. The council did not assemble again, and as soon as we had retired every one went home.

In the morning the Prefect hastened to express his regrets for the vexatious occurrence of the night. He assured us that the Mandarin whose conversation had annoyed us had a bad tongue, but a good heart; and that every one there felt the greatest regard for us.

"We are perfectly convinced of that," we replied; "but the circumstance that took place last night was very scandalous. All the servants in the house were witnesses of it, and the news has, probably, by this time, been spread all over the town. Every one knows, no doubt, that one of the military officers of the town undertook to put chains upon us; and, under these circumstances, we do not think it would accord with our dignity to set off again directly. We will repose here for a day. It must not be thought

that we hastened to get away because we were afraid. For the sake of our own honour and yours, every one must know that we have been treated properly by the authorities of I-tchang-fou."

The Prefect was evidently vexed to hear us speak in this way; but he admitted the legitimacy of our reasoning, and resigned himself to the hard necessity of keeping us another day in his tribunal.

The day passed in peace, and even rather agreeably. We saw again the Mandarins with whom we had made acquaintance during the night, with the exception, however, of the formidable antagonist of the English army. It was in vain that we invited him, and assured him that we had no more inclination to chain others than to be chained ourselves, he would not come; but he sent us his visiting card, alleging his innumerable occupations as the cause that would prevent his waiting on us in person.

We profited by this day of rest to see the town; but we found nothing remarkable in it; in general, all the great towns of China are much alike: there are crowds of people running about, and pushing against one another, but no public monuments, or anything to interest a traveller, such as he would find in Europe.

We quitted I-tchang-fou, however, as free men, without either handcuffs or chains on our feet; and we felt sure that they would not in any tribunal venture to make such a proposal in future, for fear of seeing their prisoners metamorphosed into unwelcome guests.

We continued our journey still down the river, as this was decidedly the most convenient, pleasant, and expeditious mode of travelling. On our way we passed another custom-house, but without being stopped. The officers were tranquilly smoking their pipes in front of it, and watched us passing without disturbing themselves. Master Ting said, that they had come to visit us before, because they had had information of there being contraband goods on board.

The custom-houses in the interior of China are not numerous, or at all severe in their proceedings. At the time when we had been in the same position as other missionaries travelling as native Chinese, and, consequently, subject to the same laws as any one else, we traversed the Empire from one end to the other, without having anywhere had our trunks searched, which contained European books, sacred ornaments, and many other prohibited articles. The officers of the customs used to present themselves; we declared that we were not merchants, and carried with us no contraband goods; we then offered our keys in a very calm and stately manner,

and requested them to examine our trunks, which they never did. If they had been as rigid and active in the performance of their duty as those of France, for instance, the poor missionaries would not have been able to get off so well; but one can mostly extricate oneself from any difficulty of this kind in China by means of a small pecuniary offering.

The greater part of the custom-houses are established solely for salt, the trade in which, in most of the provinces, is a government monopoly; the Chinese make a great consumption of this article; their food is full of it. In almost every family you find an abundant provision of herbs and of salt fish, as it is the ordinary food of the lower classes; and even those of a higher rank always have it served on their tables. It is with salt, also, that they correct the insipidity of their rice boiled in water. The Chinese are small eaters, and live on very little; we have always thought that, as salt is a nutritive substance, the quantity they take of it must supply the want of more food; but with this kind of diet it may be supposed they must be continually thirsty, and that accounts for their drinking tea at all hours of the day.

Since the last war with the English, the government has established a great number of custom-houses along the line that European goods have to follow to reach the interior of the Empire. The Chinese being forced to permit the trade which the English opened for themselves with their artillery, have no other way than this to oppose their invasion; and consequently the further their goods proceed into China, the heavier become the duties to which they are subjected. Too weak to repel force by force, and say we will have none of your merchandise, this is the only expedient they have been able to hit on, in order to protect the native industry.

We arrived early at *I-tou-hien*, a town of the third class, where we were received in a charming Communal Palace by a mandarin no less charming. The first magistrate of I-tou-hien is, unquestionably, the most accomplished person we ever met among the Chinese functionaries.

He was quite a young man, somewhat weakly, with a pale face, apparently attenuated by study. He had obtained the degree of doctor in Pekin, when he was scarcely more than a child; and his gentle and spiritual-looking countenance was rather set off than otherwise by a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles of European manufacture. His conversation, full of good sense, refinement and modesty, was really delightful; and the exquisite politeness of his manners might have reconciled any one ever so adverse to them,

to the Chinese Rites. On our arrival we found a splendid collation of delicious fruit, laid out in a cool fresh pavilion, in the midst of a garden shaded by large trees. Among the rarities of this rich dessert we remarked with pleasure cherries of a brilliant red colour, fine peaches, and other fruits that do not grow in the province of Hou-pé, and we could not help expressing our surprise at the circumstance. "How could you possibly procure such rare fruit?" said we to our amiable Mandarin.

"When one wishes to please friends," said he, "one always finds means to do so. The resources of the heart are inexhaustible."

We passed the whole day and part of the night in talking to this interesting Chinese. He had many questions to ask concerning the various nations of Europe; and he always made his inquiries in a serious judicious manner, worthy of a man of high intelligence. He did not ask one of the puerile silly questions to which his brother Mandarins had accustomed us so much. Geography appeared to be the subject that most interested him, and he had a great deal of very accurate knowledge concerning it. He surprised us very much by asking, whether the European governments had not yet realised the project of cutting through the Isthmus of Suez, so as to connect the Mediterranean with the Indian Ocean; and we found him very well informed concerning the extent and importance of the five parts of the world ; and the space that China occupies upon the globe.

The Europeans are quite in error when they attribute to the Chinese a total ignorance of geography, because they find among them absurd maps, a kind of caricature of the earth, manufactured for the amusement of the lower classes ; from these it has been concluded that even the studious men know no better. At all times the Chinese have given proofs of having great interest in geographical knowledge. It is very evident that with their present system of remaining at home, and refusing admittance to foreigners, it must be very difficult for them to acquire precise and circumstantial information concerning other countries, but much valuable knowledge may notwithstanding be found in their writings ; and Klaproth has availed himself of the assistance of Chinese geographers, to throw a great deal of light on the geography of Asia in the middle ages. The recent important publication of M. Stanislas Julien, upon the travels of a Chinese in India in the sixth century, show how much there might be to learn in the works of men who could observe so well and describe what they had observed so faithfully.

We found in an Arab book entitled the "The Chain of Chro-

nicles," composed in the ninth century, a passage capable of giving a good idea of what was known in China at a time when European knowledge was exceedingly small. We will quote this fragment from the Arab writer, as it seems likely to interest the reader:—

"There was at Bassora a man of the tribe of Coreishites, called *Ibn-Vahab*, and who was descended from Habbar, the son of Al-Asvad. The town of Bassora having been ruined, Ibn-Vahab quitted that country, and went to Siraf. At that time there was a ship just setting sail for China, and it occurred to Ibn-Vahab that in these circumstances he would embark in this ship. When he arrived in China, he wished to see the supreme king, and he therefore set out for Khom-dan*, and from the port of Khan-fou† to the capital is a journey of two months. He had to wait a long time at the Imperial gate, although he presented petitions in which he announced himself as being come of the same blood as the prophet of the Arabs. At length the Emperor placed a house at his disposal, and ordered that he should be provided with everything necessary; at the same time he charged the officer who represented him at Khan-fou to make inquiries about this man, and to consult merchants concerning him who asserted himself to be of the family of the prophet of the Arabs, to whom may God be propitious! The governor of Khan-fou announced in his answer, that the pretensions of this man were well founded. Then the Emperor admitted him to his presence, and made him considerable presents, and he returned to Irak with what the Emperor had given him.

"This man had grown old, but he retained the use of his faculties. He related to us that when he was with the Emperor, that prince asked him many questions on the subject of the Arabs, and the means they had employed to overthrow the Empire of Persia. This man had replied, 'The Arabs have always been conquerors by the help of God, whose name be praised! because the Persians have been plunged in the idolatrous worship of the sun, the moon, and the fire, instead of the Creator.' The Emperor said, 'The Arabs triumphed on that occasion over the noblest of empires, containing the most cultivated lands — the most abounding in riches — the most fertile in intelligent men, the country of him whose renown has extended farthest of all.' Then he continued,

* At present *Si-ngan-fou*, the capital of the province of *Ho-nan*, where was found the inscription of which we have spoken, and which really was, at this epoch, the residence of the Emperors of the dynasty of Tang.

† Khan-fou is a sea-port in the province of Tche-hiang. We once made the same journey as the Arab traveller, and took about the same time for it.

'What is, in your opinion, the rank of the principal empires in the world?' The man replied that he was not able to give an opinion on such matters. Then the Emperor ordered the interpreter to say to him these words: 'We ourselves count five great sovereigns. The richest is he who reigns in Irak; that is situated in the middle of the world, and the other kings are placed around him. He bears among us the title of King of Kings. After this empire comes our own: the sovereign of which is named the King of Men; because there is no king who maintains better order in his states, or exercises better vigilance over them. Also there is no people more submissive to its prince than ours. We then are really the kings of men. Next comes the King of Wild Beasts, who is the King of the Turks, and whose states are contiguous to those of China. The fourth king in rank is the King of Elephants, that is to say the King of India. He is called among us also the King of Wisdom, because wisdom originated among the Indians. Lastly, there is the Emperor of the Romans, called among us the King of Fine Men, because there is not on the earth a better-made race of men, nor with more handsome faces than the Romans. These are the principal kings. The others hold only a secondary rank.'

"The Emperor afterwards ordered the interpreter to say these words to the Arab: 'Would you recognise your master if you were to see him?' The Emperor meant the Apostle of God, to whom may God be merciful! I replied, 'And how should I see him, when he is now on high with God?' The Emperor replied, 'I did not mean that, I was speaking only of his face.' Then the Arab answered, 'Yes.' Immediately the Emperor had a box brought to him, and placing it before him, he took from it some pieces of paper and gave them to the interpreter, saying, 'Let him see his master.'

"I recognised on these pages the portraits of the prophets, and, at the same time, I repeated prayers for them, so that my lips moved.

"The Emperor did not know that I had recognised the prophets, and he asked the interpreter why I moved my lips. The interpreter asked me, and I answered, 'I was praying for the prophets.' The Emperor asked how I had known them, and I answered, 'By the attributes that distinguish them. Thus, there is Noah in his Ark, he who saved himself with his family when the Most High God commanded the waters, and all the earth with its inhabitants was submerged. Noah only with his family escaped the deluge.' At these words the Emperor began to laugh, and said, 'You have guessed rightly, when you recognised Noah; but as to the submersion of the whole earth, that is what we do not believe. The

deluge only covered a part of the earth; it did not reach either this country or India.' Ibn-Vahab reported, that he was afraid to refute what the Emperor had said, or urge the arguments that he might have used, but which the prince would not have admitted. He resumed, however, saying, 'There is Moses and his rod, with the children of Israel.' 'That is true; but Moses showed himself on a very little theatre, and his people were not always well disposed towards him.' I then said, 'There is Jesus sitting upon an ass, and surrounded by the Apostles.' The Emperor said, 'He appeared only for a very short time: his mission did not last more than thirty months.'

"Ibn-Vahab continues thus to pass in review the different prophets; but we will confine ourselves to repeating a part of what he said to us. Ibn-Vahab added that above each prophet's face there was a long inscription, which he supposed to contain the name of the prophets, their country, and the circumstances that accompanied their mission. Afterwards he continued thus: 'I saw the face of the Prophet (upon whom be peace!); he was mounted on a camel, and his companions were also mounted on camels, placed around him. All wore on their feet Arab coverings; all had toothpicks attached to their girdles. As I began to weep, the Emperor told the interpreter to ask me why I shed tears; I replied, "That is our prophet, our Lord, and my cousin. Peace be upon him!" the Emperor replied, "You have spoken truly. He and his people raised the most glorious of empires, only he was not to see with his own eyes the edifice he had founded. The edifice was only seen by those who came after him."

"I saw also a great many other pictures of prophets, some of whom were making a sign with their right hands, joining the thumb and the fore-finger, as if by this movement they had wished to attest some truth. Some were represented standing, and making a sign with their finger towards heaven. There were also others, whom the interpreter told me were prophets of India.

"Afterwards the Emperor interrogated me concerning the caliphs and their customs, as well as upon our religion, manners, and customs, and such things as I was capable of answering. Then he added, 'What, in your opinion, is the age of the world?' I replied, 'People are not agreed about that. Some say six thousand years, others more, but the difference is not great.'

"Thereupon the Emperor laughed very much, and the Vizier, who was standing near him, signified also that he was not of my opinion. The Emperor said, 'I do not think your prophet said that.' Then my tongue turned, and I said, 'Yes! he did say so.'

Immediately I saw signs of disapprobation on the Emperor's countenance, and he charged the interpreter to transmit to me these words:—

"'Pay attention to what you say. Men do not speak to kings till they have well weighed what they are going to say. You have affirmed that you are not all agreed upon this point; you are not then agreed upon what your prophet has asserted, and you do not accept all that your prophets have established. It is not right to be divided in such cases; on the contrary, such affirmations should be received without dispute.

"'Take care of that, and do not commit the same imprudence again.'

"The Emperor said many more things which have escaped my memory, on account of the length of time that has elapsed since. Afterwards he added, 'Why did you not go rather to your own sovereign, who, both from his residence and his race, would suit you much better?' I replied, 'Bassora, my native place, was in desolation. I was at Siraf. I saw a ship going to set sail for China. I had heard of the splendour of the empire of China and of the abundance of all things that are found in it. I wished to come to this country, and see it with my own eyes. Now I am about to return to my own country, to my sovereign and my cousin, and I will speak to him of the splendour of this country, to which I have been a witness. I will speak to him of the vast extent of this country, of all the advantages I have enjoyed in it, of all the goodness that has been shown to me.' These words pleased the Emperor. He ordered that a rich present should be given to me, and that I should return to Khan-fou on post mules. He even wrote to the Governor of Khan-fou to recommend him to treat me well, to give me the preference over the officers of his government, and to provide me with everything I wanted up to the moment of my departure, and I lived in abundance and satisfaction until I left China.

"We questioned Ibn-Vahab on the subject of the town of Khom-dan, where the Emperor resided, and on the manner in which it was laid out. He spoke to us of the extent of the town, and of the number of the inhabitants. The town, he said, is divided into two parts, separated by a long broad street. The Emperor, the Vizier, the troops, the Cadi of Cadis, the eunuchs of the court, and all persons who belong to the government, occupy the right or eastern side. No person of the lower class is to be found there, nor anything like a market. The streets are traversed by rivulets, and bordered by trees, and they contain vast mansions.

"The part situated on the left, or west side, is destined for the

people, for merchants, shops, and markets. In the morning, at day-break, you see the stewards of the Imperial Palace, the servants of the court, of the generals and their agents, entering on foot and on horseback the part of the town where the shops and markets are; you see them buying all that is wanted by their masters, and after that they return to their own quarter, and you see nothing of them till the next morning.

"China possesses many agreeable things, delightful groves with rivers winding through them, but you never find the palm-tree."

In reading these accounts of the Arab travellers, it is easy to be seen that they have really been in China, and apart from the exaggerations inherent in the Oriental character, it is also easy to recognise the country of which they speak. There exhales, as it were, a certain odour of China from their writings, that cannot be mistaken. Strange that this people, so often overthrown by long and terrible revolutions, should still have preserved that peculiar stamp that will always distinguish them from every other.

The Chinese of the ninth century, of whom these Arabs speak, are certainly the same that Marco Polo found in the thirteenth, although they were then subject to the dominion of the Mongol Tartars. Three centuries later, when the Portuguese doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and again discovered China, they recognised the people whom the illustrious Venetian traveller had previously made known in Europe, and in our own days we may only be said to have renewed acquaintance with the same old Chinese that were discovered by the Arabs and Marco Polo.

CHAP. IX.

Names given by the Chinese to the Kingdoms of Europe. — Origin of the words China and the Chinese. — Explanation of the various names that the Chinese give to their Empire. — Good and venerable Prefect of Song-tche-hien. — Portrait of the Ancient Mandarins. — Holy instructions of the Emperors. — A Khorassanian of the Imperial Court. — Details concerning the manners of the Ancient Chinese. — Causes of the decay of the Chinese. — Means employed by the Mantchoo Dynasty to consolidate its Power. — Foreigners not always excluded from China. — Bad Policy of the Government. — General presentiment of a Revolution. — Navigation on the Blue River. — Tempest. — Loss of Provisions. — Running aground Three times. — Shipwreck. — The Shipwrecked.

The young prefect of I-tou-hien, after having gathered with liveliest interest all the information we could give him concerning the different countries of Europe, bethought himself to ask us how we

called his country in our language. When he heard that we gave it the name of *China*, and its inhabitants that of *Chinese*, he could hardly recover from his astonishment. He insisted upon knowing what these words meant, the sense attached to them, *why* the words China and Chinese should have been chosen to designate his country and his countrymen. "We," said he, "call the happy inhabitants of your illustrious country *Si-yang-jin;* now Si means West, yang sea, and jin man, so that the word means 'Men of the Western Seas;' that is the general denomination. To designate the several nations, we transcribe their names as faithfully as our characters will allow of. Thus we say *Fou-lang-sai*, that is to say *homme-faran-çais*. When we speak of the Westerns we sometimes seize on a striking trait of the people whom we wish to point out. Thus we call the *In-ki-li* (English) *Houng-mao-jin*, that is, 'Men of Red Hair,' because it is said they have hair of that colour; and we give to the *Ya-me-li-kien* (Americans), the name of 'Men of the Gaudy Banner,' because it is said that they carry at the mast of their vessels a flag striped with various colours. You see that all these denominations have a sense, a meaning for the mind. That must be the case also with your words China and Chinese; since those words do not belong to our language, they must necessarily signify something in yours."

These expressions, very strange certainly in the ear of a Chinese, seemed to trouble our worthy magistrate so much, that to prevent him from imagining that they had any satirical and malevolent sense, we were obliged to enter on a little historical dissertation, and prove to him that these words did belong radically to the Chinese language; that it was the name they formerly gave themselves, but that we have altered it to suit our own mode of speech, as they out of *Français* have made *Fou-lang-sai*.

It is, in fact, indisputable that these words do come from the country itself. The Chinese have always had the habit of designating their empire after the reigning dynasty. It is thus that in remote times they gave it the names of *Tang*, of *Yu*, and of *Hia*. The great exploits of the Emperor of the dynasty of Han, brought this name into use, and after that time the Chinese bore the name of *Han-jin* or Men of Han, which is still common, especially in the northern provinces.

The dynasty of *Thang* having distinguished itself still more by its conquests than that of Han, the name of *Thang-jin* was for several centuries in use to designate the Chinese. In our time China, being governed by the Mantchoo dynasty, which has adopted the title of *Thsing* "pure," the Chinese call themselves *Thsing-jin*,

or men of Thsing, as they bore the name of *Ming-jin*, under the dynasty of *Ming*. It is precisely as if the French had taken successively the names of Carlovingians, Capetians, and Napoleonians, according to the dynasties that have reigned at different epochs in France.

The name of China, by which we designate this vast country, is in almost general use in Eastern Asia. We get it from the Malays, who call this Empire Tchina. The Malays became acquainted with the Chinese in the second half of the third century before our era, when the famous Emperor *Thsing-che-houang* subjected the southern part of China and Tonquin, and even carried his conquests as far as Cochin China.

The people of the Malay Islands, having direct relations with these countries, then met the Chinese, who bore at the time the name of Thsing, after the reigning dynasty. The Malays, not having precisely the letters required, pronounced the word Tchina, adding an *a* to it. The pilots and some of the sailors, who afterwards took the Portuguese ships into Chinese ports, were of Malay origin, and it was quite natural that the Portuguese should adopt the name that their guides gave to China. Thus the first Europeans called it Tchina, and this name was afterwards slightly modified, according to the language of the various nations who adopted it.

It is equally certain that the first relations of the Chinese with India date from the time of the Thsing dynasty. This name was changed by the Hindoos also into Tchina, for the same reason as among the Malays; and they substituted *tch* for *ths*. The Arabs received the word from India, and wrote it *Sin-Sina* to accommodate it to their language, and thence probably came the Latin *Sinæ-Sinenses*, used to designate the Chinese.

Although the Arab navigators, and the first Portuguese who went to India, had adopted the Sanscrit and Malay name of Tchina for Southern China, the northern part of this country not bearing the same name among the neighbouring nations, was also differently named in the West. Under the dynasty of Han, that is to say, in the two centuries before and after our era, the Chinese conquered all Central Asia, as far as the banks of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. They established there military colonies, and their merchants traversed those countries to exchange their merchandise for other productions from Persia and the Roman Empire. They brought principally silk and tissues of that material, which found an excellent market in Persia and Europe. According to Greek authors, the word *ser* signifies the silk-worm, and the inhabitants

of *Serica* the country from which the silk came. This fact shows that the name of *Seres* denoted the valuable article of trade that the Western nations obtained from them. In Armenia the insect that produces silk is called *chiram*, a name that has some resemblance to the *ser* of the Greeks. It is natural that these two words should have been borrowed from the Eastern nations, and that is what the Mongol and Mantchoo languages make it easy to demonstrate.

We may infer from this, that the names of silk, among the ancients and moderns, originated in the eastern part of Asia. Silk is called *sirk* among the Mongols, and *sirghe* by the Mantchoos. As these two nations inhabit the north and north-east of China, is it likely that they received these denominations from the people of the West? On the other hand, the Chinese word *see*, which signifies silk, has not only a resemblance to *sirk* and *sirghe*, but also still more to the *ser* of the Greeks. This analogy will appear so much the more striking when we consider that in the Chinese language the letter *r* is not pronounced. The Corean word for silk is identical with that of the Greeks. Silk has then, it seems, given its name to the people who first fabricated it and sent it to the west; and the Seres of the Greeks and Romans were evidently the Chinese*, whose Empire was formerly separated by the Oxus from that of Persia.

Among the different names that the Chinese give to their country, the most ancient and the most in use is that of *Tchoung-kouo*, that is to say, the Empire of the Centre. The Chinese historian relates that this denomination dates from the time of *Tching-wang*, the second Emperor of the dynasty of Tcheou, who reigned towards the end of the twelfth century before our era. At this epoch China was divided into several principalities, which all took the title of kingdoms. *Tcheou-koung*, uncle of the Emperor, gave to the town of *Lo-yang*, in what is now the province of *Ho-nan*, where the Chinese monarch resided, the name of Central Kingdom, because it was, in fact, situated in the midst of the other kingdoms of China. Since that time, the portion of the Empire possessed by the Emperors, or the whole of it, has borne this title. Such is the true and only origin of that

* "It would be curious," says Klaproth, who has furnished the greater part of these considerations on the different names of China, "to know at what period the word *silk* was introduced into the English language. It appears to be the same as the Russian *chelk*, which I believe to be derived from the Mongol *sirk*: this is so much the more likely as Russia was for a long period under the Mongol yoke."

denomination, which has been preserved to our own day; yet most of the European books that treat of China, jest about this name, and boldly infer from it, that the Chinese are completely ignorant of geography; whilst it would be nearer the truth to say, that we ourselves are ignorant of their traditions. "I have no need," says Klaproth in his Memoirs, "to refute the absurd idea of those who pretend that the Chinese believe their country to be situated in the middle of the world, and that it is for this reason they give it the name of the Central Kingdom." A sailor or a porter of Canton might, perhaps, give such an explanation; but it remains for the intelligence of the questioner to adopt or reject it.

The Chinese also give to their country the name of *Tchoung-hoa*, or, Flower of the Centre; of *Tien-chao*, the Celestial Empire, or Heaven's Empire; and of *Tien-hia*, the "Beneath the Heavens," or the world, as the Romans called their dominions *Orbis*.

Of course, we did not give our Mandarin all the details into which we have been now entering, or speak to him of the Greeks, the Romans, or even the Arabs; but we told him enough to make him understand why we call his countrymen the Chinese, and not *Tchoung-kouo-jin*, or Men of the Central Empire.

Our explanations satisfied him completely, and he appeared quite happy to see that the word Chinese was not an abusive nick-name, as he had been at first inclined to think.

We were at last obliged to take leave of this interesting doctor, and it was not without regret. Most gladly would we have remained another day, but the Rites were there to forbid it, and we could not show ourselves wanting in politeness towards a man who had treated us with so much delicate attention.

From I-tou-hien we went by land to Song-tche-hien, not a long stage, and by a tolerably agreeable road. We stopped at this last town on the recommendation of the young Prefect of I-tou-hien. He had informed us that we should find there one of his friends filling the office of first magistrate, with whom we should be well satisfied. He had had this Prefect informed of our arrival over night, and he must have written some wonderful things concerning us, for we were received with extraordinary pomp. A triumphal arch was erected at the gate of the Communal Palace ornamented with hangings of red silk and artificial flowers, glittering with tinsel, and gleaming with coloured lanterns. As soon as we had entered the first court we were welcomed by a noisy discharge of innumerable fireworks, which the guardians of the palace had been holding suspended by long strings at the end of bamboo canes. On the threshold of the saloon of reception stood awaiting us a worthy

old gentleman, still vigorous, who, on seeing us, appeared all sparkling with joy. This was the first magistrate, on whom so high a eulogium had been pronounced at I-tou-hien. Our presence put him apparently quite beside himself with joy. He clasped us in his arms, looked at us smilingly, went and came and gave orders to everybody, and then began again his little salutations and caresses. At length he grew more calm, and we seated ourselves to take tea while awaiting the collation that he had given orders to serve to us. It was rather late, as we had arrived sooner than we had been expected.

This respectable magistrate had not the refinement of mind and the distinguished manners of his young colleague at I-tou-hien, but he appeared to us endowed with great penetration. His conversation was agreeable, and the absence of elegance in its forms was well compensated by a tone of frankness and good humour that suited his advanced age wonderfully well. We learned from his *sse-yé*, or privy councillor, that he had sprung from a poor peasant family, and that his youth had been spent amidst labour and privation. He had passed the literary examinations with so much applause, that, notwithstanding the obscurity of his birth and his total want of patronage, he had obtained the degree of Bachelor, and subsequently, at Pekin, that of Doctor. Afterwards he had toiled painfully up the lower grades of the magistracy, until by merit alone, he had reached the office of Prefect of a town of the third order. To attain still higher dignities it would have been necessary to go to considerable expense, and make costly presents to ministers and persons influential at court. He could not, therefore, pretend to any higher employment, because he was poor, and he was poor because he would not fleece the people under his jurisdiction, and because he administered justice gratuitously, and shared his modest revenue with the poor of his district; but every one loved and blessed his rule.

As soon as we were installed in the Communal Palace we remarked that the people entered freely into all parts of it, invading the courts, the gardens, the apartments, and even taking the liberty of entering the one where we were talking with the Prefect. Master Ting having made an observation that we did not like these tumultuous assemblies, "Let them come," said the Prefect, smiling and looking at us with an air of supplication; "pray do not send them away; they will not incommode you, they only want to see you. If you should find them troublesome, I need only make a sign to them, and they will retire immediately."

We took very good care not to vex this good magistrate by having put in force at Song-tche-hien the strict orders that we had given in other places. On that day there was absolute free admission for all, and every one was at liberty to come and study as much as he pleased the physiognomies and appearance of the men of the Western Seas. Whilst the curious contemplated us with open mouths and staring eyes, the good Mandarin watched them with great delight, and we on our parts were greatly pleased to observe his good-natured face, and to be able to afford so much gratification to the public. Everything went off very peaceably, and without occasioning us the least trouble.

When one set had stared enough they retired, and made room for others, and if ever there occurred the least noise or disorder among them, their Prefect had but to say a word or make the slightest gesture of disapprobation, and they were all quiet in a moment; his smallest orders were obeyed in a manner at once respectful and filial.

The Prefect of Song-tche-hien, surrounded by his people, was the very image of a father in the midst of his children, the most touching realisation of the fundamental idea of the laws and institutions of China, which are always based on the principle of paternity, and which suppose that every functionary is a father to his people, and they as children with respect to him. At present this magnificent system is only a vain theory, and, with some few rare exceptions, it is never found but in books; the Mandarins are scarcely anything else than a formidable association of little tyrants and great thieves, strongly organised for the pillage and oppression of the people. We repeat, however, that this disorder is not the necessary consequence of Chinese institutions; it is not inherent in the principle of the government, but, on the contrary, it is a flagrant violation of that principle.

In reading the annals of China we remarked that under certain dynasties the Mandarins were good magistrates, occupying themselves paternally with the interests of those confided to their care. They went out often to visit the people under their government; they inquired for themselves into the wants of the poor and the sufferings of the unfortunate, in order the better to succour them; they traversed the rural districts to examine the state of the harvests, to encourage the laborious farmers, and reprimand those who showed negligence in their work. If an inundation or any other public calamity took place, they hurried to the spot to investigate the evil and inquire into the remedy. On the first and the fifth day of each moon they gave instruction to the people

who were eager to receive it, and especially they administered justice with strict impartiality. Every oppressed man, every one whose rights had been interfered with, might present himself at the tribunal; he had but to strike on a great cymbal, placed expressly for that purpose in the interior court, and the Mandarin, as soon as he heard the sound, was obliged to appear and listen to the complainant at any hour of the day or night.

Now things are managed in a very different manner: there are indeed in all the localities places appointed where the Mandarins ought to instruct the people; they are called *Chan-yu-ting* or "Hall of Holy Instructions;" but on the appointed day the Mandarin does but just walk in, smoke a pipe, drink a cup of tea, and walk out again. Nobody is there to listen to him, and if there were he would not trouble himself to say a word. In the tribunals the "Cymbals of the Oppressed" are still to be seen; but the oppressed take good care not to strike upon them, for if they did they would be immediately fined or whipped.

The conduct formerly observed by the Mandarins towards the inhabitants of a district was only a repetition, on a small scale, of that of the Emperor towards his subjects. It has always been a custom with the Chinese sovereigns to publish from time to time instructions to their subjects on morals, agriculture, and industry. This practice dates from the most remote times of the monarchy. The Emperor of China is not only the supreme head of the state, the great sacrificer or high priest, and principal legislator of the nation, he is also the chief of the Literary aristocracy, and the first doctor in the empire; he is not less bound to instruct than to govern his subjects, or rather governing and instructing ought to be in his empire the same thing. All decrees are instructions; orders are given under the form of lessons, and bear that name; chastisements and punishments are the complement of the lesson; the Emperor is regarded strictly as a father whose duty it is to teach his children, and who is compelled sometimes to chastise them.

The chan-yu, or holy edicts, emanating from the Imperial pen for the instruction of the people, are ordered to be read and explained, on the first and the fifteenth day of every month, with great state, and according to the ceremonial that regulates these solemnities. In every town or village, the civil and military authorities, attired in their state costume, assemble in a public hall; the master of the ceremonies, a personage always indispensable in Chinese meetings, cries in a loud voice to all present, to file off according to their rank; and he warns every one not to

fail to perform before a tablet, inscribed with the sacred names of the Emperor, the three genuflexions, and nine knockings of the head. This ceremony over, they pass into the hall, named Chan-yu-ting, where the people and the soldiers standing in silence, the master of the ceremonies says, "Begin with respect." The magistrate, who has the office of reader, then advances towards an altar, on which perfumes are placed, kneels down, and takes, with every demonstration of respect, the tablet, on which is written the maxim that has been chosen for the explanation of the day, and then mounts upon the platform.

An old man receives the tablet, and places it on the platform opposite to the people; then commanding silence with a little wooden instrument in the form of a bell, he reads the sentence in a loud voice. Afterwards the master of the ceremonies cries, "Explain that sentence of the Holy Edict;" and the orator rises, and explains the sense of the maxim, which usually turns on some commonplace of the moral books of the Chinese.

This custom, if seriously carried out, can only be laudable and useful, but as it is done now, it is merely a vain ceremony. The case is the same with the celebrated festival in which, in the first days of spring, the Emperor goes with all his court into the country to cultivate a field himself, by way of encouraging agriculture; and every Mandarin is required to repeat the same ceremony in his district. It is indisputable that these fine institutions had formerly great influence, when they were seriously carried out by the Mandarins and the people. We could bring a crowd of examples, drawn from the annals of China, to give an idea of what this nation was in times past; but we prefer leaving the already quoted Arab author to speak, since his testimony will be less suspected than that of a Chinese writer.

"A man who was a native of Khorassan, had come from Irak, and bought there a great quantity of merchandise; then he embarked for China. This man was very avaricious and selfish, and there arose a dispute between him and the eunuch whom the Emperor had sent to Khan-fou, the rendezvous of the Arab merchant, to choose amongst the merchandise newly arrived whatever should be suitable for him. This eunuch was one of the most powerful men in the empire; it was he who kept the treasures and riches of the Emperor. The dispute took place on the subject of an assortment of ivory and other merchandise, the merchant refusing to yield his goods at the price offered; the discussion grew warm, and at last the eunuch carried his audacity so far as to put aside what was best among the merchandise, and to seize upon it by

force, without troubling himself at all about the claims of the proprietor.

"The merchant set off secretly from Khan-fou, and went to Khom-dan, the capital of the empire, two months' journey or more, taking his way to China, already mentioned.

"The custom is, that he who rings the bell over the head of the king* should be conducted immediately ten days' journey off, to a kind of exile. There he is kept in prison for two months, and then the governor of the place sends for him and says:—'You have taken a step, which, if your claim is not well founded, will bring on you ruin and loss of life; the Emperor has established for you, and persons of your class, viziers and governors of whom you may, when you please, ask justice. Know that if you persist in addressing yourself directly to the Emperor, and that your complaints should not be found to be such as to justify such a step, nothing can save you from death.

"'It is good that every man who should be inclined to do as you have done, should be deterred from following your example. Desist then from your claim, and return to your proper business.' When a man in such a case withdraws his complaint, they give him fifty blows with a stick and send him back to the country whence he came, but if he persist, he must be conducted into the presence of the Emperor. All this was done with the Khorassanian, but he persisted in his complaint, and still asked to speak to the Emperor. He was, therefore, brought back to the capital, and taken before the Prince, and the interpreter questioned him as to the purpose he had in view in what he had done. The merchant then related how a dispute had arisen between him and the eunuch, and how the eunuch had taken his goods from him by force. The affair, he said, had made a noise in Khan-fou, and had become public.

"The Emperor ordered that the Khorassanian should be again put in prison, but that he should be provided with everything he required to eat and drink; at the same time he wrote by the Vizier and his agents to Khan-fou, to desire them to obtain information concerning the merchant's story, and endeavour to discover the truth.

"The same orders were given to the Master of the left, the Master of the right, and the Master of the centre, the three persons on whom, after the Vizier, the command of the army depends; it is to them the Emperor entrusts the guardianship of his person,

* The Emperor has in his palace a bell for the use of the oppressed who claim his protection, but it is now as much off duty as the cymbal of the Mandarins.

and when that prince goes to war, or on similar occasions, each of the three takes the place that his title indicates.

"These three functionaries, therefore, wrote to their subordinate officers.

"All the information they received tended to justify the recital of the Khorassanian, and letters to the same effect came from various parts of the empire. Then the sovereign sent for the eunuch, and as soon as he arrived, his goods were confiscated, and the Emperor withdrew from his hands the treasure that had been entrusted to him. At the same time he said, 'You would well deserve that I should put you to death. You have exposed me to the censure of a man who came from Khorassan on the frontiers of my empire, who has visited the country of the Arabs, after that, the countries of India, and lastly my states, in the hope of enjoying my benefits. You would then, that this man, in returning to these countries, and revisiting the same nations, should say, "I have been the victim of injustice in China, and they have stolen my goods." I will refrain from shedding your blood, in consideration of your former services, but I shall appoint you to be the guardian of the dead, since you have not respected the interests of the living.' By the order of the Emperor, this eunuch was then charged to watch over the royal tombs, and to keep them in good order.

"One of the proofs of the admirable order that reigned formerly in the empire, and the great difference there is at present*, is the manner in which the judicial decisions were given, the respect for the law which animated all hearts, and the anxiety shown by the government for the administration of justice and in the choice of persons who had given sufficient proofs in the legislation, of sincere zeal, an invincible love of truth, a firm resolution not to yield what was right for the sake of persons of importance, and a most scrupulous regard to the rights of property of the weak, which might fall into their hands.

"When the Cadi of Cadis was to be appointed, the government, before investing him with the office, sent him into all the cities, which by their importance are regarded as the pillars of the empire. He remained in each city one or two months, and made inquiries into the state of the country, its customs, and the disposition of the inhabitants. He inquired after persons on whose testimony he could rely to such a degree, that when they had spoken, it was useless to seek for more information. When this

* At this epoch the empire was in a state of revolution.

man had visited the principal towns of the empire, and that there remained no considerable place where he had not sojourned, he returned to the capital, and they put him in possession of his office.

"This was the Cadi of Cadis, who chose and governed his subordinates. His knowledge of the different provinces of the empire, and of the persons who in each district were worthy of being charged with judicial functions, whether they were natives of the country or not, was a well-grounded knowledge, which made it unnecessary for him to have recourse to the recommendations of people who, perhaps, might have had partialities, and have replied in a manner contrary to the truth. There was no cause to fear that any Cadi would venture to write to his superior things whose falsehood he would immediately have detected, and would then have dismissed his informant.

"Every day a crier proclaimed at the door of the Cadi these words, 'Is there any one who has any complaint to make, whether against the Emperor, whose person is withdrawn from the sight of his subjects, or against any of his officers, or agents, or his subjects in general? For these things I stand in the place of the Emperor, in virtue of the powers he has conferred upon me.' The crier repeated these words three times. It is an established principle that the Emperor does not disturb himself from his occupations, unless some governor has been guilty of evident iniquity, or that the supreme magistrate has neglected to administer justice, and to watch over the persons confided to his care. Now as long as he keeps himself from these two things,—that is to say, as long as the decisions given at his tribunals are conformable to equity, and that the functions of the magistracy are confided to persons who are friends of justice, the Empire is maintained in the most satisfactory state."— *Chain of Chronicles*, p. 106.

This last observation of the Arab writer is still applicable to China at the present day. It is because the magistracy is no longer confided to persons who are friends of justice, that this empire, once so flourishing and so well governed, is sinking rapidly to decay, and advancing towards certain, and perhaps speedy, destruction.

In seeking for the causes of this general disorganisation, of this corruption that has obviously penetrated into every stratum of Chinese society, and is working its ruin, it seems that we find it partly in a very important modification of the ancient system of government, which was introduced by the Mantchoo dynasty. It

decreed, namely, that no Mandarin should hold office in the same place more than three years; and that no one should be appointed in his own province. The motive that dictated such a law may easily be guessed.

As soon as the Mantchoo Tartars saw themselves masters of the empire, they were terrified at their small number;—lost as they were in some measure in the midst of the countless multitude of Chinese, they must have asked themselves what means they had of governing this immense nation, naturally hostile to a foreign dominion.

To fill all public offices with Mandarins chosen from amongst the Tartars would not have been sufficient; and it would also have been no very good method of pacifying the minds of a people so jealous, and so convinced of their own merit. It was, therefore, decided that the vanquished party should not be excluded from public functions; but the offices of the Supreme Courts of Pekin were doubled, and divided between the Tartars and Chinese. These latter had in great part the administration of the provinces, with the exception, however, of the first military Mandarinates and the command of the fortified places, which were reserved for the Tartars.

Notwithstanding all these precautions, it was still difficult for the conquering nation to consolidate its power, and it was in constant fear of conspiracy. There could not but be among the high officers some partisans of the fallen dynasty; and the authority which they enjoyed in the provinces must give them great influence in any attempt to raise the people. It was easy for them to weave plots, and have an understanding with those under their authority to undermine and finally overthrow the new government. It is, therefore, probable that it was with the view of paralysing these attempts at counter revolution, that it was determined that no one should be a Mandarin in his own country; and that no magistrate should exercise his functions more than three years in the same place.

The Mantchoo dynasty did not fail, of course, to colour this innovation with specious pretexts, relating to the public advantage and its solicitude for the welfare of the people, and forgot not to allege that the magistrates being far from their relations and friends, would be more free to devote themselves entirely to their functions and the interests of the country.

Such were the motives publicly avowed to render this alteration in the institutions of the empire acceptable; but in fact the object

was to hinder influential men from taking root anywhere, and creating themselves partisans.

The conquerors of China have perfectly succeeded in this object for the space of two hundred years. As the great Chinese Mandarins have been always wandering from province to province, without being able to fix themselves anywhere, all concert between them has become impossible; and as the heads of parties,—the representatives of Chinese nationality, could never rely upon agents whose authority was but temporary, conspiracies among them were easily crushed. This policy, judicious perhaps for the consolidation of a rising power, could not fail to be in the end a source of disorder. In making into a law of the empire what ought to have been a mere transitory expedient, the imprudent conquerors of China deposited in the very root of their power a poisonous germ, that has developed itself gradually, and borne fatal fruits.

The magistrates and public functionaries, having only a few years to pass at the same post, live in it like strangers, without troubling themselves at all about the wants of the people under their care; no tie attaches them to the population; all their care is to accumulate as much money as possible wherever they go, and continually repeat the operation, till they can return to their native province to enjoy a fortune gained by extortion in all the rest. It is in vain to cry out against their injustice and their depredations; it matters little to them what is thought of them, they are only birds of passage; the next day they may be at the other extremity of the empire, and will hear no more of the cries of the victims they have despoiled.

The Mandarins have thus become utterly selfish, and indifferent to the public good. The fundamental principle of the Chinese monarchy has been destroyed; for the magistrate is no longer a father living in the midst of his children, he is a marauder who comes one knows not whence, and who is going one knows not whither. Thus since the accession of the Mantchoo Tartar dynasty everything in the empire has fallen into a languishing and expiring condition. You see no more of those great enterprises, those gigantic works, which are indicative of a powerful and energetic life in the nation that executes them.

You find in the provinces monuments that must have required incredible efforts and perseverance: numerous canals, lofty towers, superb bridges, grand roads over mountains, strong dykes along rivers, &c. But now, not only is nothing of the kind ever un-

dertaken, but even what has been done under former dynasties is suffered to go to ruin.

Man, especially if he be not a Christian, can seldom free himself from his selfishness; he likes to enjoy the fruits of his labour himself, and seldom lays the foundation of an edifice but in the hope of seeing its completion. "Why," might one of these Mandarins of passage say to himself, "should I undertake what I shall never have time to finish? Why sow, for another to reap the harvest?" And with these views, the interests, moral and physical, of the population, are entirely abandoned. There are, we doubt not, governors of provinces, and prefects of towns, capable of effecting useful reforms, of creating beneficial institutions, and executing works often much wanted; but considering that they are only there for a day, they have not courage to put their hand to the work; egotism and private interest easily gain the upper place in their thoughts; they occupy themselves exclusively with their private affairs, leaving the interests of the public to be looked after by their successors, who in their turn leave it to those who may come after them.

This system, supposed to be established with the object of withdrawing the Mandarins from private and family influence, and rendering their administration more free and independent, has had the very opposite effect. The functionaries succeed each other so rapidly in the various localities, that they are never acquainted with the affairs submitted to their administration; and often enough they even find themselves flung into the midst of a population whose very language they do not understand. They are often unacquainted with the manners and customs of the country; for it would be a great mistake to suppose that the Chinese are all alike. The difference is, perhaps, more strongly marked between the various provinces of China, than between many separate kingdoms of Europe. When the magistrates arrive at their Mandarinate, they find, fixed at their posts, the interpreters and subaltern functionaries, who, as they know all about the affairs of the locality, can easily render their services indispensable. In the smallest circumstances, the magistrates would be incapable of acting without the help of these agents, who are, in fact, the real governors.

The papers relating to all the lawsuits are in their hands; they alone draw them up, and settle beforehand the tenor of the judgment to be given. The magistrate has only to promulgate in public what they have arranged in private, and without his participation. Now, all these immovable factotums are on the spot;

they have with them their relations and friends; and it is therefore not at all surprising that judicial and administrative affairs are conducted chiefly through intrigue and cabal. The tribunals are full of these vampires, incessantly occupied in draining away the substance of the people, first, for the Mandarins, and then on their own account and that of their friends. We have often been brought into relation with these gentry; we have seen them at their dirty work, and we can hardly say whether the sight inspired most indignation or disgust.

Thus it appears, that since the accession of the Mantchoo dynasty, Chinese society has undergone great alteration for the worse.

In Europe, people have strong ideas of the immobility of this people. These innovations, introduced by the conquering race, are regarded as customs dating from the most remote antiquity, and necessarily resulting from the Chinese character. Who, for instance, is not convinced that this people has a natural antipathy to foreigners, and has always endeavoured to keep them away from its frontiers? Yet nothing can be more incorrect. This exclusive and jealous spirit belongs particularly to the Mantchoo Tartars; and it is only since the commencement of their rule that the empire has been hermetically sealed to foreigners.

In past ages the Chinese kept up constant relations with all the countries of Asia. Arabs, Persians, Indians traded in their ports without any hindrance; they even penetrated into the interior, and freely traversed the provinces. That Khorassanian, and that Arab who journeyed in peace to the capital of the Empire to demand an audience of the Emperor, are in themselves a proof of this. The monument of *Si-ngan-fou* (the inscription on which we have mentioned) testifies that foreign missionaries had then preached and practised the Christian religion in all freedom. In the thirteenth century, Marco Polo was, with his father and his uncle, very well received in China at two different epochs. Although Venetians, they exercised there public functions of the highest importance, Marco Polo having been made governor of a province. About the same epoch, an archbishop existed at Pekin, and Christian religious ceremonies were publicly performed. Towards the end of the first Chinese dynasty, when Father Ricci and the first Jesuit missionaries recommenced their labours, it does not appear that they had to contend with the same difficulties as at the present day; they were honourably received at court, and the first Tartar Emperors only tolerated what they found already existing.

All this proves that the Chinese have not always had such a

great aversion to foreigners as is imagined. Many Mandarins, with whom we have had occasion to discuss this question, and to whom we have endeavoured to show how anti-social and insulting to other nations the Chinese policy was, have declared to us that the real Chinese had never repulsed foreigners, and that all the severe measures taken against them date only from the commencement of the present dynasty.

The Mantchoos, it is evident, were, on account of the smallness of their numbers in the midst of this vast empire, compelled to adopt stringent measures to preserve their conquest. For fear that foreigners should be tempted to snatch their prey from them, they have carefully closed the ports of China against them, thinking thus to secure themselves from ambitious attempts from without; and in the interior of the empire they have sought to keep their enemies divided by their system of rapid and constant change of public officers. These two methods have been crowned with success up to the present time; and it is really an astonishing fact, and one, perhaps, not sufficiently considered, that a mere handful of nomades should have been able to exercise, for more than two hundred years, a peaceable and absolute dominion over the vastest empire in the world, and over a population which, whatever may be the common opinion respecting them, are really extremely stirring and fond of change. A policy, at the same time adroit, supple, and vigorous, could alone have obtained a similar result; but there is every reason to think that the methods which once contributed to establish the power of the Mantchoo Tartars will ultimately tend to overthrow it.

These strangers — these barbarians whom the government of Pekin appears to despise because it dreads them — will sooner or later grow impatient at seeing its gates obstinately closed against them; and some fine day they will burst them open, and find behind them a population, countless, it is true, but disunited, without any cohesive force, and at the mercy of any one strong enough to seize them, wholly or in part.

The venerable Mandarin of Song-tche-hien, that "fine old Chinese gentleman," uttered many lamentations over the decay of his country. "Since the sacred traditions of our ancestors," said he, "have fallen into oblivion, heaven has abandoned us. Those who watch attentively the march and the progress of events, those who observe how great is the selfishness of our magistrates, how profound the degradation of the people, feel a dark and mournful presentiment. We are on the eve of an immense revolution — this is felt by numbers; but will the impulse come from without or

from within ? No one knows — no one can foresee. One thing is certain ; this dynasty has lost the divine protection, and the people have now only feelings of contempt and anger for those who govern them. Filial piety exists no longer amongst us, and the Empire must fall."*

The Mandarin who talked in this way was, it is true, of a very advanced age, and consequently we were not surprised to find him somewhat inclined to grumbling and taking a sombre view of things. Horace's old man is a cosmopolite. The young and fascinating Prefect of I-tou-hien saw the evil, we doubt not, as clearly as his respectable friend of Song-tche-hien, but he did not despair, or think that the Chinese nation had arrived at the end of its career. He remarked, indeed, that all was out of order ; there was not a wheel in the State machine that did not grind ; but he loved the machine, he thought it well and learnedly put together, and that it might be possible to make it do its work for centuries longer. But for this a wise and skilful mechanician was indispensable. Upon this last point, however, he was very reserved, and evidently did not say all that he thought : his position as a high government officer demanded great prudence, and we took good care not to press him on a question of so much delicacy ; however, he said enough for us to suspect that the fall of the Tartar dynasty would not altogether break his heart. He seemed to think it quite reasonable and natural that the Chinese nation should be governed by a Chinese Emperor, and several Mandarins have expressed the same feeling in our presence, but it does not exist among the masses, who, as we said, think it very absurd to occupy yourself gratuitously with political questions. Such a feeling may, however, exist in a latent state, and, to awaken it, there needs only an event — an opportunity, such as has occurred at several of the most celebrated epochs in the history of China.

The Prefect of Song-tche-hien, a great admirer of antiquity, studied to fulfil towards us the duties of hospitality, in a manner truly patriarchal. We were not merely for him travellers and strangers, whom it was necessary to take care of, because the law and the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen had ordered it. We were his guests in the full force of the term, and not only his guests, but also the guests of his friends — of his colleagues in the civil and military administration ; the guests, in fact, of all the inhabitants of Song-tche-hien. We were, of course, obliged to show ourselves

* It is to be observed that these Recollections were written in 1849 from notes collected during 1846.

sensible to these friendly demonstrations, and live in some measure in public. The utmost privacy we could obtain was only just what was sufficient for repose and prayer. The Prefect would leave to no one else the care of arranging our departure. He went himself to the port to choose our boats, and he hired a third for his chief secretary and some domestics, who were to accompany us as far as Kin-tcheou, where we were to stop. He had also shown us the attention of sending his cook on board with a rich assortment of provisions, in order to continue his generous hospitality as long as he could.

We quitted Song-tche-hien very early in the morning. As the greater part of the night had been spent in gossiping, we felt as soon as we came on board that a small appendix to the very limited portion of sleep we had been permitted to take would be very acceptable. A good breeze diffused a refreshing coolness over the deck. Our servant made our travelling bed under a great sail, and we fell asleep very comfortably, lulled by the sound of the waves, as they dashed against the junk. During nearly an hour we enjoyed this delightful repose, but after this the post became untenable. The breeze continuing to freshen, the vessel acquired an uneasy jerking motion — sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left; and as the horizontal position became extremely difficult to keep, we rose and tried how we could maintain the vertical one. The river, already at this part of Hou-pé, is a league wide, and presented a magnificent aspect to the eye; but one not altogether satisfactory for our navigation, as the wind was blowing with extreme violence, and the movement of the junk was very disagreeable.

We went below, and found, as usual, our dear Mandarins lying side by side on mats, and smoking their accursed opium. As soon as we appeared, they extinguished their little lamps. "It seems," said we, "that opium is food enough for you — no one appears to be thinking of dinner; but we must do honour to the provisions sent us by the kind Prefect of Song-tche-hien." At these words, very simple and natural, we thought, as it was late, and we had as yet taken nothing, our Mandarins looked completely bewildered. No one answered a word. "When it is convenient," said we, "will you give orders to the servants? It will not do to put it off too long, the wind is still increasing, the junk will soon be shaken so that it will be impossible to keep our feet."

Master Ting cast on us a compassionate look; he half opened his mouth, but no words came out. We saw that something vexatious had happened, but we could not guess what. At length, col-

lecting all his energies, he burst out, in a despairing tone, with, "What shall we do, we have no victuals! The junk that carries the Prefect's provisions is far on before us — perhaps we shall overtake it. If you like, we will amuse ourselves in the meantime with taking tea; that will give us something to do." The kind of recreation that our ingenious conductor proposed to us was, certainly, a very innocent one; but we knew from long experience, that it is not very strengthening for the stomach. To amuse oneself by drinking tea, when one is exceedingly hungry, is absolutely to open a gulf instead of filling one up.

We came up on deck again, rather disappointed, and looked over the vast surface of the river, in hopes of discovering the bark that bore our cook and his accessories. A large yellow flag, we were told, floated at the mast, by which we should know the vessel. We looked, however, in vain. We saw many trading junks with their large mat sails, driven by the wind and tossed by the waves; but vainly on every side did we look for our provisions; — there was nothing for it but resignation, nobody was to blame. The place had, indeed, been mentioned where the other junk was to have waited for us; but, very likely, the violence of the wind had not permitted it to stop. Probably, we said, we saw those provisions embarked with too lively a feeling of satisfaction, and this disappointment has been permitted to give us a lesson.

We went below again to preach patience and resignation to our staff; but we were followed by the master of the boat, who, seeing our distress, had the kindness to offer us a ration of the rice that was boiling in the great kettle belonging to the crew. We accepted his offer with gratitude, and were soon dining on rice boiled in water and seasoned with salt herbs. This was of course not very dainty fare, but we had had worse. Whilst we were performing thus an instrumental piece in the rice bowl with our little chopsticks, we had the wisdom to call to our minds the epoch when, in traversing the deserts of Tartary and the mountains of Thibet, we had no other food than some handfuls of barley flour, moistened with a little tea, or flavoured with suet.

"Heavens!" said we, "if we had every day found such a dinner as this under our tent! Fine white rice, well boiled and abundant in quantity, besides a plate of salt herbs, and preserved red pepper! Why, such a feast would have seemed a miracle! How Samdadchiemba's large face would have expanded at the sight of such a store of food. What fine stories he would have told us over it!"

The recollection of the incredible repasts prepared for us in those days by our dear camel driver, was an excellent seasoning,

and gave us quite an appetite to our present fare. We did not dine so well certainly as many persons in the world, but assuredly better than a number of unfortunate people who did not dine at all. Our estimate of our welfare here below mostly depends upon comparison. How many people live in constant suffering and distress, because they persist in always looking above, instead of below them!

Dinners past and present, however, and even Tartary and Thibet, were forgotten not long afterwards, in cares of a different kind. During the whole morning the wind had been constantly increasing, and towards noon it came on to blow so violently, that we had to take in nearly all the sail, and keep only what was just necessary to steady the junk. The river was like a great arm of the sea lashed by a gale. The waves, though shorter and lower than in the open sea, were more impetuous, and dashed furiously against each other. Our poor junk, rolling and pitching at the same time, groaned and creaked in every plank. Sometimes she seemed to be lifted high above the water, then plunged heavily down into the midst of it. We were driven about by sudden and violent gusts, occasioned by the inequalities of the shore, and now and then we were within a hair's breadth of destruction, for the poor junk, almost on her beam ends, seemed, as she trembled and shook all over, to be hollowing out a tomb for herself in the waters. The position was critical; but the chief danger arose from the want of solidity in our vessel, as, like most of the river junks, it was of very imperfect construction. The sailors appeared, nevertheless, quite easy, and we preferred attributing their calmness to their experience rather than to their indifference.

Whilst we were thus driven at the mercy of the winds and waves (but under the care of God), our Mandarins had taken refuge in a narrow cabin, where they cowered down without daring to move. We did not at all perceive on the faces of our two military gentlemen the haughty dignity that is proper to a soldier in a moment of danger. That Master Ting should want it was excusable: his quality of literary man gave him the right to be afraid. The fact was, all our conductors were affected by sea-sickness; and as they had never felt it before, nor even heard it mentioned, they all thought they were going to die. It was in vain we assured them it was a mere momentary inconvenience, occasioned by the motion of the vessel; they persisted in believing it was all over with them. "And you two" said Master Ting, with a faint voice, "does not the vessel move for you as well as

for us, and you are not ill." "Oh, that's a different case," said we, "we don't smoke opium."

"What! do you think it is the opium that is killing us?"

"Who knows? We could not venture to say that, but it is certain that opium is a poison, and that by degrees it must destroy the energy of the constitution in all smokers." Thereupon Master Ting began to curse the day when he had allowed himself to yield to the temptation of this detestable drug, and promised, that if he escaped with his life this time, he would throw pipe, lamp, and opium overboard. "Why not do it now," said we, "what's the use of waiting?"

"Oh, I am too ill now, I have not strength to move." "Well, we are not at all ill, we can see to this little matter for you," and we turned towards the place where he kept his smoking tools: but Master Ting was there before us. Suddenly awakened from his lethargy, he had made but one bound to the spot where his beloved casket was placed. The movement had been so nimble, and so totally unexpected, that his companions could not help laughing, though they were certainly not at all in the humour for it; and leaving him brooding over his treasure, we returned to the deck to see how we were getting on.

The water was less rough, and the breeze less violent; and though there was scarcely any sail set, the junk was moving swiftly on. "If this lasts," said the master, "we shall be soon at Kintcheou." And glad we were to hear him say so, for the weather looked ugly, and we wished very much to be in port again. But alas! though the distance was small, we were still far off the port.

Towards four in the afternoon, we reached a point where the river makes a bend in another direction, and instead of continuing its course to the south, turns abruptly to the west. At this point we met several junks that were tacking to get through the difficult passage, where the side wind became a contrary one. Here we saw the two other boats of our flotilla, those containing the soldiers, and the provisions; they had probably been there a long time before us, but had not been able to get any further. We began now to perform in our turn the same manœuvres as the other junks, crossing the river from one side to the other. But it was in vain we sailed quite close to the wind, as the sailors say, and that our junk lay almost on her side,—we could not succeed; we were continually driven back, and had to go through the same work all over again.

For those who are quiet on shore the sight of such manœuvres is very attractive; we contemplate with interest every movement of the vessel, we follow her progress with anxiety, we calculate

her rate of motion, and consider what she will have to do under certain circumstances. When there are several vessels engaged in the same way, we compare their relative speed in sailing, their difference of build, and of behaviour; and there is mostly some one in which we are, in spite of ourselves, particularly interested. If she excels the rest, we are quite pleased, and as proud as if we had a share in her merit.

But, to enjoy all this, one must be on shore quite at one's ease, and perhaps smoking a pipe; for those on board it is quite a different affair, and not at all amusing. The first and even the second time the manœuvres have to be repeated one can keep one's patience tolerably well, but then one begins to get tired; and when the weather is bad, and the navigation dangerous, — when you go on tacking and tacking, without ever advancing a step — you really are in danger of losing your temper; at least, if you are so unfortunate as not to be able always to resign yourself to the will of God, in small as well as in great things.

We had been more than an hour thus tacking about, without any one of the vessels being able to pass the point in question; but at last, though the gale had increased, some of the junks did succeed in doubling the headland, and disappeared.

We thought then that our turn was coming, but we were mistaken; backwards and forwards we went, always in the same track, until all at once a sudden gust seized us, and threw us, not past the point, but on the opposite shore, which, fortunately, was only sand and mud, so that the junk was not broken; and after the crew had vociferated for a long time, they endeavoured to get her afloat again. Every one set to work, sailors, Mandarins, and missionaries, and with much toil, in the sweat of our brow, we got her out of the sand, and recommenced our hopeless manœuvres. This time we did not even get as far as before, and presently the wind caught us again, and flung us once more on the shore we had just left.

Prudence now certainly required that we should refrain for the present from making any new attempt. We tried to convince the master that he would run the risk of losing his junk, as well as drowning us, which would be an unpleasant incident for both parties. Even supposing that we did manage to get round the point, should we be much better off with the foul wind we should find on the other side? We were of opinion, therefore, that it would be best to wait in patience for a more favourable opportunity. The vanity of our master, however, prevented him from adopting

this prudent resolution. He could not bear the idea that all the other junks had passed, and that he should be the only one left behind. He made a horrible noise on board, cursed the sailors, swore at winds and waves, and heaven and earth, and was in a perfect fury. Go on he would, or try to go on, let the wind blow as it might; so away went the poor junk, tacking to this side and that again, and struggling to do what was impossible, till we were, for the third time, dashed ashore on the sands.

The master was now at his wit's end, and, rather overpowered than resigned, he gave it up. It was almost dark too, and it would have been madness to endeavour to reach Kin-tcheou that night, with winds and waves against us. Instead, therefore, of forcing back the boat into the channel of the river, they plunged her still farther into the sand, in order to withdraw her from the action of the waves, which were dashing against her side with a fury that threatened every moment to break her to pieces.

When this operation was over, the junk was lashed to some neighbouring trees, by means of strong bamboo cables; the anchors were driven firmly into the ground; in short, all precautions were used to prevent her being carried away again. After this everybody tried to settle himself as well as he could for the night. There was neither town nor hamlet near the spot where we had gone aground; we could only perceive a farm or two scattered about, where we could not hope to pass the night any more comfortably than in our own boat.

Our dinner, as it may be remembered, had not been very sumptuous, but circumstances were now far more unfavourable to us than they had been at dinner time. We augured, therefore, that we should sup much worse, and we were by no means deceived in our expectations. We had neither a great pyramid of rice, nor salt herbs, nor red pepper. On leaving Song-tche-hien the crew had only provided for a day's voyage; they had not, indeed, made a very close calculation, and had provided abundantly for their number, but they could not have supposed they would have so large a party, or that our provisions would be likely to fail. There could not, therefore, be much food of any kind on board, and on inspection of the rice sack, it appeared that there was not enough to afford a meal for the crew, who, after the fatigue and trouble they had undergone, must have been greatly in need of it.

These worthy fellows, nevertheless, generously offered us a part of what there was, but we could not think of taking it; the rice that these poor people wanted would certainly have done us no

good, if we had eaten it. We had made up our minds, therefore, resignedly, to go to bed without supper, when Master Ting came to whisper to us that there was a cargo of pumpkins on board in the hold. The master, on being interrogated, admitted the fact, and said, that as Long-tche-hien produced enormous pumpkins, one of his friends had commissioned him to bring a quantity to the market at Kin-tcheou. We proposed to him to buy them all; the bargain was quickly concluded, and the cargo passed immediately from the hold to the kitchen. We had them boiled in large slices in the kettle belonging to the crew, and then distributed among the whole ship's company. So after all we got some supper, taking care to add to our slices of pumpkin a little *meditation* upon oatmeal.

The night passed without accident. Every one slept profoundly except the watchman, charged to strike the hours upon the tam-tam, and the next morning at daybreak, the crew were all in motion again. The wind had fallen very much, and, what was still better, it had changed its direction. We were, however, a long time in getting afloat again; for the junk had got so deep into the sand, that it was no easy matter to set her free. At last we got once more into the channel of the Blue River, and, with the wind behind us, dashed on in full sail towards the port of Kin-tcheou. We were all on deck, enjoying the freshness of the morning, and the pleasure of a smooth and rapid navigation, and contemplating the rich panorama that was unfolded before our eyes. All the faces that had been so sad and gloomy the evening before, were now radiant and saucy enough. Our Mandarins were once more convinced of the value of a life, which, when they were sea-sick, they were quite ready to part with. Master Ting was exulting to find himself still a member of this breathing world, and would have required very little pressing to act us a play. "Master Ting," said we, "you have, you see, escaped with your life, and you can move about quite well, so you must not forget to fulfil your promise: go and get your opium box, and let us pitch it overboard." He only replied by cutting a caper, saying he had only said that in fun; and to show how little disposed he was to throw his pipe into the water, he went down and began to smoke with more ardour than ever.

In the midst of this general enjoyment the master alone was still out of humour. That arrival in port that we were all longing for, was precisely what he dreaded, for he feared to encounter the raillery of the other junks. "How shall I dare to show myself?" he kept repeating. "I have *lost my face*" (that is, been dis-

honoured). Vainly did we try to encourage him: to all we could say he had but one answer, "I have lost my face!"

At last we reached the port of Kin-tcheou, and as we entered, there arose a general sensation. All the junks got into motion, shouts were uttered, arms extended, the tam-tam sounded from every quarter! Our skipper could not stand this; it was evidently nothing but raillery and sarcasm. Very soon our junk was surrounded by little boats, and the most curious of their occupants began to climb on board, and then we learned the real cause of these lively demonstrations, which were by no means satirical, but cordially congratulative. They had believed us lost. The greater part of the junks that had made the point, which we had endeavoured in vain to pass, had suffered shipwreck on the other side, in the midst of a tremendous gale.

Those that had arrived in port were entirely dismantled; they had announced that we were coming, and as we had not appeared, everybody was persuaded that we had been swallowed by the waves. The numerous misfortunes that they related to us, with many lamentable details, made us wonder at and bless the goodness of God towards us. It was indeed providential that we had run aground three times, for we had been thus prevented from reaching the point of danger. What we had regarded as a trial, was, in truth, a blessing of God, an evidence of his goodness and mercy. Whilst we were endeavouring to resign ourselves to what we thought a disappointment, we ought to have been returning thanks for a signal benefit. In many events of life men commit the same mistake, and are deceived by false appearances. We often see them inconsiderately yielding themselves a prey to gloom and sadness, when they should calmly bless the perpetual watchfulness of Providence over them.

The joy that we felt at having so wonderfully escaped shipwreck was not, however, unmingled with grief. Our two transport boats that we had been so jealous of, because they had got before us, had been lost; the one had been wrecked upon the reefs that border the shore, the other had foundered and gone down, when quite near the port. Three men were drowned, two soldiers and the Head Secretary of the Prefect of Song-tche-hien. The others had been saved by the mariners of Kin-tcheou, who had hastened to their assistance on their little bamboo rafts.

After listening to these melancholy details, we made what haste we could to the Communal Palace, whither our poor shipwrecked men had been taken; and on entering the court-yard we saw a great display of cloths spread to dry in the sun, hung to doors and

windows, or stretched upon cords. Our first care was to pay a visit to the proprietors of these garments. We found them lying on mats in the great hall, and wrapped in coverings that had been sent to them from the tribunal. When we entered they were as much astonished as if they had seen so many ghosts appear; no doubt they had supposed us drowned, and by this time thought no more of us. The irreproachable condition of our costume especially seemed to surprise them. Being dry from head to foot, we did not look at all like men who came from the bottom of the Blue River; but a few words served to explain how very fortunate for us had been our vexations of the preceding evening. We visited all the men in succession, and did not find one dangerously ill; they were only much exhausted, and in need of repose.

What troubled them most was the loss of their little baggage. They had saved from the shipwreck nothing but the garments that were drying in the sun, not even their pipes, which had disappeared in the tempest. This loss, however, the authorities of Kin-tcheou had hastened to make good, by sending each of them a pipe and an abundant provision of tobacco immediately. A Chinese cannot remain long without smoking, more especially when he is in grief. We soothed our shipwrecked mariners by promising to endeavour to come to some arrangement with the Mandarin of the town by which their losses might be repaired before leaving Kin-tcheou.

But what could not be repaired was the death of the two soldiers, and of the Secretary. What a blow it would be for the good Prefect when he should learn this catastrophe! The thought that this kind old man would be made responsible for this fatal accident grieved us deeply. We knew the customs of the Chinese, and that this death would in all probability be the cause of much persecution to him. The relations of the Secretary would not fail to profit by the event, to demand enormous damages. We could fancy we saw them now, rushing to the tribunal with loud lamentations, tearing their hair, rending their garments, and demanding their relative with great outcries. It was evident that the Prefect of Song-tche-hien was in no way guilty of this misfortune; nothing could be imputed to him, but no matter. The man had been in his service, he was responsible for him, he must restore him to his family. "He is dead," you may say; "the victim of an accident."

"We, his relations, know nothing about that," will be the reply. "He was at your house yesterday; to-day he has disappeared. You must restore him to us, you must answer for him, life for

life ; or, if you do not wish to have a law-suit commenced against you, and to be accused of homicide, let us come to some agreement." Such a circumstance is often enough to interrupt the career of a Mandarin, and ruin him completely.

Such is the way they manage these matters in China, if not always, at least very often, and this monstrous abuse proceeds, perhaps, from an excellent principle, which is the safeguard of the lives of many men. This principle is that of rigorous responsibility of the superior for the inferior: but at present the Chinese carry it to a vicious extreme, and, driven by their insatiable cupidity, they find means to pervert even the best institutions.

We could never find out what was the result of this affair. We hope, however, that the popularity enjoyed by the Prefect of Song-tche-hien, and possibly also the integrity of the Secretary's family, may have preserved him from much harassing. We should be grieved indeed to think that this most worthy and venerable Mandarin should have fallen into serious trouble in endeavouring to provide for our comfort.

CHAP. X.

Chinese City in a state of Siege. — Nautical Sports on the Blue River. — Quarrel between Victors and Vanquished. — Civil War at Kin-tcheou. — Glance at the Military Strength of the Chinese Empire. — Discovery of Two Soldiers in the Residence of a Missionary. — Description of an extraordinary Review of Troops. — Policy of the Mantchoo Dynasty with respect to Soldiers. — Chinese Navy. — Cause of the want of Bravery in the Chinese during the last War with the English. — Resources of the Empire for the formation of a good Army and a powerful Navy. — A great Reformer needed. — Departure from Kin-tcheou. — Route by Land. — Great Heat. — Journey during the Night by Torch and Lantern.

Since we had left the frontiers of Thibet, our passage through every Chinese town had been a kind of little event ; the Mandarins and the people, every one we met, seemed anxious about the Europeans who had been to Lha-ssa; they crowded to see them, sometimes they even got up a little riot in their honour, and were sometimes so excited as to fail in respect to the authorities. Our arrival at Kin-tcheou, following that of a number of shipwrecked mariners, could not but excite still more the curiosity of the inhabitants of this great town ; and the uproarious reception we had met with in the port induced us still more to expect a great sensation in the town. But we were quite mistaken ; we

passed unnoticed, and nobody seemed to trouble themselves about us. The reason of this was, that Kin-tcheou was at the moment the scene of an important event that left little room for curiosity in the minds of the inhabitants. The town was, so to speak, in a state of siege, in consequence of a bloody battle that had taken place two days before, between the Chinese and the Mantchoo Tartars. When we entered, all was calm and gloomy. We traversed long streets that were silent and almost deserted; the shops were closed, or only half open, the few persons whom we met hurried along with rapid steps, sometimes forming little groups in which they spoke in a low voice, and with great animation. We saw that all minds were in a state of fermentation, everything seemed to breathe of civil war.

This conflict between the Chinese and the Tartars had had its origin in some nautical sports. It is customary in China, at certain seasons of the year, to have junk races, and for the towns near navigable rivers, and the sea-ports, this is an occasion of great rejoicing; the magistrates, and sometimes the rich merchants of the locality, distribute prizes to the victors; and those who wish to enter the lists organise themselves into a company, and appoint a chief. The junks that serve for these games are very long and narrow, so that there is only just room for two benches of rowers; they are most richly carved and ornamented with gilding and designs in bright colours. The prow and the poop represent the head and tail of the Imperial Dragon; they are therefore called *loung-tchouan*, that is to say, dragon boats. They are hung with silks and tinsel, and along their whole length are displayed numerous streamers; bright red pennants float in the wind: and on each side of the little mast that supports the national flag are placed two men, who never leave off striking the tam-tam, and executing rolls on the drum, whilst the mariners, leaning over their oars, row on vigorously, and make the dragon junk skim rapidly along the surface of the waters.

Whilst these elegant boats are contending with one another, the people throng the quays, the shore, the roofs of the neighbouring houses, and the vessels that are lying in the port. They animate the rowers by their cries and plaudits; they let off fireworks; they perform at various points deafening music, in which the sonorous noise of the tam-tam, and the sharp sound of a sort of clarionet giving perpetually the same note, predominate over all the rest. The Chinese relish this infernal harmony.

It happens sometimes that a dragon boat is upset in a moment, and emptied of its double line of rowers; but the crowd greets the

incident with a shout of laughter; nobody is at all disturbed, for the men who row are always good swimmers. You soon see them emerge from beneath the water, swimming about in all directions to catch their oars again, and their rattan helmets; the water springs up beneath their abrupt and rapid movements, you might take them for a troop of porpoises disporting in the middle of the waves. When every man has found his oar and his hat again, the dragon boat is placed once more on her keel, the streamers are put to rights as well as circumstances will permit, and then comes the grand difficulty of how to get into her again; but these people are so agile, adroit and supple, that they always manage it somehow. The public has often the satisfaction of witnessing these little accidents on fête days, for the boats are so frail and light, that the slightest fault in the movements of the rowers may capsize them.

These nautical games last for several days together, and are continued from morning till night, the spectators remaining faithfully at their posts all the time. The ambulatory kitchens and the dealers in provisions circulate through all parts of the crowd to feed this immense multitude, which, under pretext of having no regular meal at home that day, is eating and drinking continually, whilst rope dancers, jugglers, pickpockets, and thieves of every species, profit by the opportunity to turn their talents to account, and vary the amusements of the day. The official fête is terminated by the distribution of the prizes, and the rowers wind up with merrymaking, and sometimes also with quarrelling and fighting.

This had taken place at Kin-tcheou a few days before our arrival. As it is the most important garrison town of Hou-péo the soldiers and sailors are there in great numbers. During the celebration of the last nautical games, the Chinese and Mantchoos had divided themselves into two camps, and had long disputed the prize for the dragon boats; but the Mantchoo Tartars had at last gained the victory, and this had been solemnly proclaimed with unaccustomed formalities by the principal Mandarins of the garrison, so that the vanity of the Chinese had been much wounded. Pieces of silk, jars of wine, roast and boiled pigs, and a certain sum of money, had been distributed to the victors, who divided among them the money and the silk, and then arranged an immense banquet for the consumption of the pigs and the wine.

In these banquets it is usual for the defeated party to drink to the health of the conquerors, and the ceremony is gone through as it ought to be amongst good comrades; after these few cups of wine have been drunk in the prescribed manner, a fusion of the two

parties is effected, and victors and vanquished take their places indiscriminately at the table. On this occasion, however, the Chinese, who had long borne ill will to the Tartars, drank to them with a very bad grace; there were even, it is said, injurious expressions uttered, and murmurs against the partiality of the judges of the nautical race. By degrees a quarrel arose, and the Tartars, excited by wine and the taunts of the Chinese, thought proper to remind their adversaries that they were the masters of China, and that the conquered owed respect and obedience to the conquering race. The battle then began, and some of the Chinese were soon stretched dead and horribly mangled on the ground. Immediately the agitation spread over the whole town; the Chinese rushed about tumultuously, without knowing very well where they were going, but uttering frightful cries. Without having lived in the midst of such a population as this, it is scarcely possible to conceive the disorder and confusion that reign in a Chinese town in times of trouble.

Whilst the Chinese were vociferating and rushing about the streets of Kin-tcheou, the Tartars had taken refuge in their cantonments, called the Tartar town, where is the palace of the *kiang-kiun*, or commandant general of the military division of the province. This important post is always occupied by a Tartar. The Mantchoos concentrated themselves to the number, it is said, of 20,000, in the tribunal of their grand Mandarin, and then they barricaded all the gates. The Chinese, persuaded that they were afraid of them, poured into the Tartar town, and surrounded the tribunal as if to besiege it. A general attack commenced, not indeed with murderous weapons, but with thousands of voices, furiously demanding to have delivered up to them a number of Mantchoos equal to the Chinese who had been killed, in order that they might revenge themselves upon them by killing and mutilating them at discretion. Whilst they were making these demands, which, horrible as they were, were nevertheless in accordance with Chinese custom, not a sound was heard from the interior of the tribunal, not one of the besieged was to be seen. The Chinese, more and more persuaded that they were become formidable to the Tartars, resolved to break open the gates. At the first attempt, however, the gates were abruptly flung back, and the Mantchoos rushed out, pouring a hail of balls and arrows over the unarmed multitude, and then throwing themselves upon them sword in hand. The rash assailants scoured nimbly back to their quarters, and hurried into their houses, not forgetting to shut the door; and doubtless not promising themselves to begin again to-

morrow; but about thirty Chinese were left dead upon the spot, and the number of wounded was very considerable.

On the two following days there was no new collision, for every one prudently remained at home; but the still and lugubrious aspect the town presented when we entered it, denoted that the public mind was still a prey to great anxiety, and that under this apparent calm were brooding irreconcilable antipathy and hatred. Immediately after the murderous affair that had taken place at the gates of the Tartar tribunal, the military commandant and the Prefect of the town had each sent off despatches to Pekin, in which the events were doubtless represented in a very different manner. A decision was now expected from the capital, and it was generally supposed that the Chinese would be reprimanded, the Mantchoo general recalled, but only to be sent to a better post, and that then the matter would be allowed to drop.

It may be conceived that in such circumstances, it would have been an easy thing for the Chinese of Kin-tcheou to exterminate this handful of Mantchoos. It was only necessary to surround them, and drive them in one upon another to suffocate them. After the first charge that took place at the gate of the tribunal, if that innumerable multitude had not run away, the Mantchoos would have been lost; but, as we have already remarked, the Chinese are unorganised, without chiefs, and therefore without strength or courage. There is no one to communicate an impulse to the whole body; every one has to give it to himself, and it consequently has reference only to his private interests, and never to that of the public.

The government maintains in some of the most important towns of each province of the Empire a garrison composed in great part of Mantchoo soldiers, under the command of a great military Mandarin, who belongs also to this nation. His power cannot be controlled by any civil functionary, not even by the Viceroy of the province. He corresponds directly with the Emperor, and it is to him alone he is responsible for his administration. This body of troops remains entirely separate from the population in every town where they are stationed, and the quarter they inhabit bears the name of the Tartar town.

With the exception of these bands of Tartar soldiers in some of the towns, you may traverse the provinces in every direction without being sensible of the presence of the Mantchoo element in the population. You see only Chinese, who are entirely absorbed in the interests of commerce, industry, and agriculture, whilst the foreign soldiers are guarding the frontiers, and watching over the public

tranquillity. The Tartars really seem, in fact, less like a conquering people than an auxiliary tribe that has obtained by its valour and its victories the privilege of mounting guard in the Empire. The administrative influence has remained with the Chinese; it is they who fill the greatest number of civil offices; and if they have been conquered by the Mantchoos, they have imposed on their conquerors their language, their manners, their civilisation, and, in a great measure, their customs.

Having but recently issued from the forests and steppes, where they led a nomadic life, maintaining themselves by their flocks and the chase, the Tartars could not but yield to the influence of the celebrated country into which they had opened for themselves a way, partly by valour, and still more by stratagem and perfidy. They were willing to leave the details of government to the Chinese, since they had taste, talent, and experience for them; but they have always taken good care to retain in their own hands the direction of the land and sea forces. The administration of the War Department has always remained exclusively in the hands of the Tartars.

It is impossible to make even an approximate calculation of the strength of the Chinese army in ordinary times, for of course we cannot speak of its actual state, which must have undergone most important modifications during the progress of the present formidable insurrection. According to the official almanack, the total number of troops maintained by the Emperor amounts to no less than one million two hundred and thirty-two thousand Chinese, Mantchoos, or Monguls, quartered in the interior of the Empire, as well as thirty-one thousand sailors. Such a figure as this is evidently too high, and a mere calculation of the Chinese Almanack. We traversed China in all directions for several years, and could not help asking ourselves where was this mighty army, of which we nowhere saw any signs? China is doubtless a vast country, its population greater than that of all Europe put together; yet if the soldiers were as numerous as they are said to be, it would still be possible to see something of them. Now, with the exception of the towns already mentioned, where there are some organised and stationary troops, we never saw any but the militia necessary for the service of the tribunals. M. Tembowski, who in 1821 conducted a Russian Embassy to Pekin, collected the most exact information possible concerning the effective force of the Chinese army; and the total amount he gives is that of 740,900 men, including Chinese, Mantchoos, and Mongols. It is probable that this statement is much nearer the truth, at least as far as relates

to the number of soldiers registered as belonging to the army; but it by no means follows that there are in China actually seven hundred thousand men on active military service. We believe that even this number must be reduced two-thirds, if we wish to get at the number of men who really follow the trade of arms.

We have ourselves lived long enough in Tartary to become acquainted with what are called the Mongol troops; they are composed of nomadic shepherds, who pass their lives in keeping their flocks, and never trouble themselves about military exercises. They have indeed in their tents a long matchlock, and sometimes a bow and arrows, but they make use of them only to kill yellow goats and pheasants. If they have a lance, they never touch it, but to run after the wolves that make war upon their flocks of sheep; for this Mongol division of the Imperial army consists of families of shepherds, including infirm old men and infants at the breast; they are all counted in, as every male is born a soldier, and begins immediately on his birth to receive his pay.

The Chinese troops are almost as fictitious as the Mongols. Their number is estimated at five hundred thousand men, but they are composed chiefly of artisans and labourers living in the midst of their families, and occupying themselves quite at their ease with the cultivation of their fields, or with working at their trade, without appearing to suspect the least in the world that they belong to the class of warriors. From time to time, they have to put on what passes for a uniform, when they are summoned to a general review, or required to go and root out gangs of thieves. But apart from these rare occasions, when also they can generally find a substitute for a few sapecks, they are left in perfect tranquillity at home. As, however, they are all counted as soldiers, and the Emperor has the right to convoke them in case of war, they receive annually a small sum, very insufficient though for them to live upon, if they did not add to it the produce of their daily toil.

In certain localities regarded as the strong places in the Empire, all the inhabitants are enrolled in this manner.

During the last year of our former abode in China, we were once charged with the care of a little Mission in a southern province. There was a chapel to celebrate the holy mysteries, and assemble the neophytes in the hours of prayer and religious instruction; near the chapel a small house with a garden, the whole surrounded by great trees, a high flint wall, and thickets of bamboo. We lived in this retreat with two Chinese, one about thirty years old, the other nearly twice that age. The first bore the title

of Catechist; he assisted us in the functions of the holy ministry, overlooked our small housekeeping, and instructed the Christian children and the catechumens in the manner of chanting the public prayers. In his moments of leisure, which were not a few, he occupied himself with sewing, for in fact he was by trade a tailor. He was a very worthy fellow, of gentle, quiet manners, uttering very few unnecessary words, and only rather too fond of medicine and medical books. This mania had come to him because, from seeing himself always pale, meagre, and miserable-looking, he thought he must be ill, and that he would like to doctor himself, and had consequently plunged into the study of medicine.

The elder Chinese had no official title in the Mission; but he looked after a great many things concerning the cleanliness and good order of the chapel and the presbytery, and the digging and watering of the garden, where he succeeded more or less in raising a few flowers and vegetables. He was also our cook, when there was anything to be cooked, and he had besides the self-imposed duty of holding long conversations with all who came to our abode, and his generosity in offering tea and tobacco made him very popular. He had formerly been a smith, and since his new functions were not very well defined we had continued to call him Siao the smith.

One day these two companions of our solitude presented themselves in our chamber with a certain air of solemnity, to ask our advice. An inspector extraordinary had, it appeared, arrived from Pekin, and there was shortly to be a general review. What the old smith and the tailor wanted to know was, whether they should go to it. "That must depend upon yourselves," replied we; "if you think it will amuse you, and that you like to go, we will keep the house. We do not care to see the show; we saw quite enough of those things in the north of the Empire."

"We have never been there yet," said the catechist; "we have always been able to get off easily; but they say the new inspector is strict in requiring every one to come. Everybody that does not will be put down, and then condemned to five hundred strokes of the rattan and a heavy fine."

We thought this inspector must be the most extraordinary man we had ever heard of, to require everybody to come and see his review under pain of five hundred strokes of the rattan and a heavy fine.

"Why, if that be the case," said we, "we must go too."

"Our Spiritual Father may go to see it if he pleases, but we soldiers of the Emperor are bound to be present."

"You soldiers!" we exclaimed, contemplating our two Christians from head to foot. We thought we must have misunderstood them, and that they had said "subjects of the Emperor;" but not at all, they were really soldiers, and had been for a long time. For more than two years that we had known them we had never had the smallest suspicion of the fact, though this does little credit to our sagacity; for when there had been any reviews, exercises, or forced labour, they had been in the habit of going away, and leaving as their substitutes any persons they happened to meet with. Our catechist confessed to me, nevertheless, that he had never touched a gun in his life, and that he should be afraid to do so. He did not think he should have courage to fire off a cracker.

Being now sufficiently enlightened as to the true social position of these two functionaries of the Mission, we told them that as they bore the title of soldiers and received the pay, they must fulfil the duties, at least on extraordinary occasions; that the threat of the rattan and the fine was an unequivocal proof of the will of the Emperor on the subject, and that, as Christians, they were specially bound to set a good example of obedience and patriotism. It was then agreed that they should go where honour called, and on our side we determined to be present at a display which promised to be so magnificent.

The appointed day having come, our two veterans of the Imperial Army took, at an early hour, a very solid breakfast, and emptied a large jug of hot wine to keep up their spirits. After this they set about disguising themselves as soldiers. This did not take long. They had but to substitute for their little black caps a straw hat of a conical shape, with a tuft of red silk at the top, and to put on over their ordinary clothes a black tunic with a broad red border. This tunic had, before and behind, an escutcheon of white linen, upon which was drawn, very large, the character *ping*, meaning soldier. The precaution was by no means a useless one, for without such a ticket one might easily have made a mistake. This little tailor, for instance, with his pallid face, feeble diminutive body, and tearful looking eyes, always modestly cast down, had not such a decidedly martial aspect that there was no mistaking him; but now, when you looked either at his breast or his back, there was the inscription, as plain as possible, "This is a soldier," and you knew what he was meant for.

When their costume was quite complete, our two heroes took, the one a gun and the other a bow, and set off for the field of Mars. The very moment they were gone we locked our street door, and set off after them to see what was to be seen.

This great military display was to take place outside the town in an immense sandy plain, to which the warriors were already hastening in little groups, accoutred in various ways according to the banner they belonged to; their arms, which did *not* trouble themselves to gleam in the sun, were also in great variety; there were guns, bows, pikes, sabres, pitchforks, and saws fastened to the end of a long handle, as well as rattans, shields, and iron culverins, which had for a carriage the shoulders of two individuals. In the midst of this medley there was, nevertheless, one thing in which the army displayed the most admirable uniformity. Every man without exception had a pipe and a fan. As to the umbrella, that did not seem to be strictly according to regulation, for those who carried umbrellas also were in a minority.

At one extremity of the field there was raised, on a slight elevation of the ground, a platform shaded by an immense red parasol and ornamented with banners, streamers, and some large lanterns that did not seem particularly necessary, as the sun was shining in full splendour; but perhaps they were intended to be symbolical, and to signify to the soldiers that they were in the presence of enlightened judges.

The Inspector Extraordinary of the Imperial Army, and the principal civil and military Mandarins of the town, were on the platform, seated in arm-chairs before little tables covered with tea-things and boxes filled with excellent tobacco. In one corner was a servant holding a lighted match, not, however, to fire cannon with, but to light pipes; and at various points of the field we saw formidable detached forts made of bamboo and painted paper. The moment arrived to begin. A little culverin that stood near the platform was fired off, the military judges covering their ears with their hands to protect them from the frightful detonation; then a yellow-flag was hoisted to the top of one of the forts, the tam-tams sounded a furious charge, and the soldiers rushed together pell-mell, uttering terrible cries and grouping themselves round the flag of their company; then they seemed to be trying to get into some sort of order, in which they were not very successful, and after that they had a mimic fight, and the mêlée, which was certainly the most effective, soon followed. It is impossible to imagine anything more whimsical and comic than the evolutions of the Chinese soldiers; they advance, draw back, leap, pirouette, cut capers, crouch behind their shields, as if to watch the enemy, then jump up again, distribute blows right and left, and then run away with all their might, crying "Victory! victory!"

One would really take them for an army of mountebanks, every one of which was playing tricks in his own fashion. We saw many soldiers who did nothing whatever but run sometimes to one side, sometimes to the other, probably because they did not know very well what to do else; and we could not get it out of our heads that our two Christian warriors belonged to this class.

All the time the battle lasted, two officers, placed at each extremity of the platform, were continually shaking a standard, and indicating by the greater or less rapidity of their movements the degree of heat of the action. Whenever the flags stopped the combatants stopped too, and then every one returned to his post, or somewhere near it, for they are not too exact in these matters.

After the grand battle there were manœuvres of certain chosen companies, who appeared tolerably well exercised, though even their evolutions had an extremely whimsical character.

The English artillery must have had easy work with enemies whose chief skill consists in cutting capers and balancing themselves a long time on one leg in the manner of the Hindoo penitents. Afterwards the fusiliers and archers went through their exercise in a very creditable manner.

The Chinese muskets have no stock; they have merely a handle like a pistol, and when you fire you do not rest the weapon against the shoulder; you hold it on the right side about the height of the hip, and before drawing the trigger, which contains a lighted match, you content yourself with fixing your eyes well on the object you mean to aim at. We have remarked that this method was very successful, which would go to prove, perhaps, that it is less necessary to keep your eye on the end of your weapon than on the mark you wish to hit, exactly as you would do in throwing a stone.

The most amusing thing in the whole review was unquestionably the firing with the small culverins. We have said that these pieces have no carriages; they are borne solemnly by two soldiers having each an end of the culverin leant on his left shoulder, and keeping it in its place with his right hand. Nothing can be imagined more comic than the faces of these poor fellows when the machine was to be fired. They took pride in showing a magnanimous serenity on the occasion, and it was easy to see that they were making immense efforts to be quite at their ease; but the position was critical, and the muscles of their faces would take such unaccustomed forms that they produced the most astounding grimaces. The Imperial Government, in its paternal solicitude for these poor human gun-carriages, orders that, before

the firing, their ears shall be carefully stuffed with cotton; and, although at considerable distance, it was easy for us to see that on this occasion the injunction had been liberally obeyed; but under these circumstances it may be imagined that it is not very easy to take aim correctly, and the Chinese seldom trouble themselves with attempting it. The ball goes where it likes, but during these exercises the artillerists were prudent enough to fire with powder only.

In the wars in Tartary, or any other countries where there are camels, it appears that these quadrupeds are made to form a battery, by placing the culverins between their humps. In a series of pictures representing the campaigns of the Emperor Khang-hi in the country of the Oeleuts, we saw many of these camel batteries; and it may be supposed from this specimen of management, how much difficulty European troops are likely to experience in a war with the Chinese. The review ended with a general attack on the forts, which it is impossible for us to give an account of, as we understood absolutely nothing of the proceedings. All we know is, that long and unimaginable evolutions were performed, and that at several periods a most deafening clamour was raised. At length the banners ceased to be shaken, the judges on the platform rose shouting "victory!" the whole army repeated the acclamation three times, and one of our neighbours, who doubtless understood what had taken place, informed us that all the forts without exception had been carried with astonishing intrepidity.

We returned to our residence, to which our two heroes, covered with dust, sweat, and glory, speedily followed us. We questioned them a good deal about the military exercises they had been performing with so much success; but they could give us no very precise information; they could not even tell what part they had themselves played in all this brilliant affair; and, according to them, two-thirds of the soldiers were not better informed than themselves. They had merely followed and imitated the movements of a few select companies. It is evident, therefore, that a pretty considerable reduction may be made from the force of 500,000 men composing what is called the Chinese division of the army.

The number of Mantchoo troops is estimated at 60,000 men. These soldiers, we believe, are habitually under arms, and are assiduous in their profession. The government watches over them with great anxiety, for the Emperor has a strong interest in not allowing these troops to stagnate in inaction; he takes care

that they shall preserve at least something of the warlike character to which they owe their conquest of the Empire. They are treated, it is said, with considerable severity, the smallest infraction of rules or neglect of duty is rigorously punished, whilst the Chinese or Mongol troops are left nearly to do as they like. It is not improbable that the reigning dynasty favours, up to a certain point, the ignorance and inactivity of the Chinese and Mongols, in order to preserve the relative superiority of the Mantchoos, and to retain an easy means of defence in case of sedition or revolt. If the 500,000 Chinese soldiers were trained to the management of arms and military discipline as well as the Mantchoos, a moment would suffice to sweep the conquering race from the Chinese soil.*

The navy of the Chinese Empire is about on a level with its land forces; it is composed of about 30,000 sailors, distributed over a considerable number of war junks. These vessels, very high in the prow and poop, of a rude construction, and rigged with sails of bamboo matting, are very difficult to manœuvre, and incapable of undertaking long voyages. They merely, indeed, run along the coasts, and up and down the great rivers, to chase the pirates, who appear to have very little fear of them. The forms of the war junks, and especially of those found in the interior of the Empire, are very various. It is to be observed, that, with some few exceptions, the Blue River has always been the principal theatre of the naval battles sustained by the Chinese. At the time when the Empire was divided into two, these battles were very numerous.

The names borne by these junks seem sometimes intended to give an idea of their form; thus the Centipede is the name of one with three rows of oars, representing the numerous feet of that hideous insect; the Hawk's Beak has the two extremities equally curved, and each provided with a helm, so that they can move backwards or forwards without going about. The Four-Wheeled junk has two wheels at the prow and two at the stern, which are turned by two men with a crank. These wheeled vessels are said to be of great antiquity, and there only needed the application of steam power to give this ingenious people ages ago the discovery of Fulton.

The whimsicality of the paintings with which they are decorated is another peculiarity of these junks. An attempt is mostly made

* We did not think it right to alter any of these remarks, which were written before the Chinese insurrection.

to give them the aspect of a fish, a reptile, or a bird. Generally there are two enormous eyes at the prow, charged doubtless with the duty of looking fierce to frighten the enemy. All these monstrosities, however, are not so surprising to a stranger as the disorder and confusion that reigns on board. You find several different households assembled in them, and not unfrequently on the deck little houses, absolutely built of masonry. European sailors admire nevertheless one idea in the construction of these vessels, that of dividing the bottom into various water-tight compartments, so that a leak can never occasion more than partial damage. It is, perhaps, because this method has been found efficacious, that it has not been thought necessary to have pumps on board.

The military government of each province, placed like the civil under the direction of the viceroy, has the command of both land and sea forces. In general the Chinese make very little difference between the services, and the various ranks in each have the same names. The generals are called *ti-tou ;* they are sixteen in number, and two belong exclusively to the sea service. These superior officers have each their head-quarters, where they assemble the greater part of their brigade, and distribute the rest in the various places under their command. There are besides, as we have remarked, many fortified places occupied by Tartar troops, and commanded by a Tartar *kiang-kiun*, who obeys only the Emperor. The admirals, *ti-tou*, and the vice-admirals, *tsoung-ping*, reside habitually on shore, and leave the command to inferior officers. The ranks of the military Mandarins correspond to the civil, and are equally conferred in accordance with the result of examinations which candidates have to undergo, either in the provinces or at Pekin, and which are varied with the importance of the degree ; thus there are Bachelors and Doctors *in War* as well as Bachelors and Doctors of Letters. The aspirants to the military degrees are examined on certain books of tactics, and also especially on their ability to draw the bow, mount on horseback, raise and throw enormous stones, scale walls, perform feats of strength, and execute a great number of gymnastic exercises, invented to delude and terrify the enemy. Literature is nevertheless not entirely excluded from these examinations ; Bachelors of War are required to be able to explain the classical books, and produce some little literary composition.

From what we have said, some idea may be formed of the Chinese army. There do not perhaps exist in the world more wretched troops, worse equipped, more undisciplined, more in-

sensible to honour, in a word, more completely absurd; they may be able to crush bands of robbers, or the hordes of Turkestan; but they have proved in the last war with the English that they are quite incapable of resisting European soldiers, even in the proportion of fifty to one.

This complete nullity of the Chinese army depends on many causes, of which the principal are the long peace the Empire has enjoyed, — a peace that may be said to have now lasted for several centuries, since the petty wars in which it has been engaged have been insufficient to revive the warlike spirit, — the policy of the Mantchoo dynasty, which seeks to perpetuate in the Chinese the feebleness that prevents them from shaking off its yoke, — the obstinacy of the government in refusing to admit any reform in the tactics and weapons of ancient times; and, finally, the discredit that for some time past has been thrown on the military profession. A soldier is, according to the Chinese expression, an *antisapeck* man, that is, a man of no value, — a man whose worth cannot be represented by the smallest coin. A military Mandarin is nobody by the side of a civil officer, and can only act according to the impulse given to him; he is the representative of force — of brute matter, a machine that must be guided by the superior intelligence of the literary man.

These causes, however, are adventitious, and we by no means believe that the Chinese are radically incapable of making good soldiers. They are capable, certainly, of much self-devotion and courage. Their annals are as full of traits of heroism as those of the Greeks, the Romans, or any other of the most warlike races. In going through the history of their long revolutions and their intestine wars, you are often struck with admiration at seeing whole populations, men, women, and even children, supporting with heroic fortitude all the horrors of a siege, and defending the walls of their cities to the last extremity. How often have the recitals of these grand struggles brought us back to modern times, reminding us of the sublime defence of Saragossa, and of the famous Russian who had the stern and terrible courage to reduce Moscow to ashes to save his country. In the first period of the Mantchoo dynasty the Chinese had the patriotism and resolution to lay waste their own coasts as far as twenty leagues up the country, and destroy villages and cities, burn woods and corn fields, in fact to create an immense desert, in order to annihilate the power of a formidable pirate, who for a long time had held in check the whole strength of the Empire. There has been much joking about the manner in which the Chinese soldiers behaved

before the English troops. After firing their pieces once, they threw them down, and fled as a flock of sheep might do if a bomb should burst in the midst of them ; and it was thence inferred that the Chinese were men essentially cowardly, deficient in energy, and incapable of fighting ; but this judgment appears to us over hasty. In these circumstances the Chinese soldiers simply showed their good sense. The means of destruction employed by the two parties were so entirely disproportioned, that there could be no room for the display of valour. On one side arrows and matchlocks, on the other good muskets, and cannon loaded with grape. When a maritime town was to be destroyed, it was the simplest thing in the world. An English frigate had only to heave-to at the proper distance, and then, while the officers, seated quietly at dinner on the poop-deck, manœuvred the champagne and madeira, the sailors methodically bombarded the town, which with its wretched cannon could only send a few balls about half way to the enemy's vessel, while their houses and public buildings came tumbling down on all sides as if struck by lightning. The English artillery was for these poor people so terrible, so supernatural a thing, that they at last believed they had to do with beings more than mortal. How could they be expected to be brave in so unequal a contest? An enemy whom they had no means of reaching, was blazing away at them quite at his ease ; what could they do but run away? They did so, and in our opinion they showed their wisdom in so doing. The government alone was to blame, for driving thousands of men almost unarmed and defenceless to a certain and useless death. The English troops are assuredly very brave, but if ever, which God forbid, they should have to defend their country against a European army with nothing better than bows and arrows, and matchlocks taken from the Chinese, they would soon, we are convinced, find some of their valour oozing away.

It may be that it would be possible to find in China all the elements necessary for organising the most formidable army in the world. The Chinese are intelligent, ingenious, and docile. They comprehend rapidly whatever they are taught, and retain it in their memory. They are persevering, and astonishingly active when they choose to exert themselves, respectful to authority, submissive and obedient, and they would easily accommodate themselves to all the exigencies of the severest discipline.

The Chinese possess also a quality most precious in soldiers, and which can scarcely be found as well developed among any other

people, namely an incomparable facility of supporting privations of every kind.

We have often been astonished to see how they will bear hunger thirst, heat, cold, the difficulties and fatigues of a long march, as if it were mere play. Thus, both morally and physically, they seem capable of meeting every demand; and with respect to numbers they might be enrolled by millions.

The equipment of this immense army would also be no very hard matter. There would be no occasion to have recourse to foreign nations. Their own country would furnish in abundance all the material that could be desired, as well as workmen without number, quick at comprehending any new invention.

China would present also inexhaustible resources for a navy. Without speaking of the vast extent of her coasts, along which the numerous population pass the greater part of their lives on the sea, the great rivers and immense lakes in the interior, always covered with fishing and trading junks, might furnish multitudes of men, habituated from their infancy to navigation, nimble, experienced, and capable of becoming excellent sailors for long expeditions. The officers of our ships of war that have visited the Chinese seas have often been astonished to meet, far away from any coast, their fishermen braving the tempests, and guiding their miserable vessels in safety over enormous waves that threatened every moment to swallow them. The Chinese would very soon be able to build vessels on the model of those of Europe, and a few years would enable them to put to sea with such a fleet as has never been seen.

No doubt the reader will think the notion of this immense army, this avalanche of men descending from the high table-land of Asia, as in the time of Tchinggis Khan, these innumerable Chinese vessels ploughing all seas, and coming even to blockade our ports, an exceedingly fantastic one, and we ourselves are certainly far from thinking it likely to be realised. But when you become thoroughly acquainted with this empire of 300 millions of inhabitants, when you know what are the resources in soil and population of these rich and fertile countries, you cannot but ask what should prevent such a nation from exercising great influence over the affairs of the human race. What it wants is a man of genius, a man truly great, capable of assimilating the power and vitality of this nation, more populous than all Europe, and which counts more than thirty centuries of civilisation. Should an Emperor arise among them possessed of a great intellect, a will of iron, a reformer determined to come at once to a rupture with the

ancient traditions, and initiate his people into the progressive civilisation of the West, we believe that the work of regeneration would proceed with rapid strides, and that perhaps those Chinese who now appear such very ridiculous people, might be thought of somewhat more seriously, and might even occasion mortal uneasiness to those who covet so eagerly the spoils of the ancient nations of Asia.

The young Mantchoo prince who in 1850 ascended the imperial throne will probably not be the great and powerful reformer of whom we have spoken. He commenced his reign by degrading and putting to death the statesmen who, during that of his predecessor, had seen themselves compelled, under the English cannon, to make some concessions to the Europeans. The high dignitaries who form his council have been chosen among the most obstinate partisans of the old *régime* and the ancient traditions; and in place of the tolerant sentiments manifested by those who opened the five ports, have come all the old traditional antipathies. Every device has been tried to elude the obligation of treaties; under the influence of the new policy, the relations between the Consuls and the Mandarins have become embittered, and the concessions of the late Emperor almost illusory.

It is evident to the least clear-sighted, that the object of the Mantchoo government is to disgust Europeans, and break off all intercourse with them; it would gladly have nothing to do with them at any price. China has, however, now been brought too near to Europe for it to be permitted any longer to lead this isolated life in the midst of the world; and if the Tartar dynasty does not itself take the initiative in a change of policy, it will be forced to it, sooner or later, by its contact with the Western nations, or perhaps by the insurrection that has broken out in the southern provinces, and which, as it has been making the most rapid progress, may any day become a social revolution, and produce a complete change in the aspect of affairs throughout the Empire. Our sojourn in the town of Kin-tcheou, after the riots originating in the nautical games, proved to us that the Mantchoos are anything but popular, and that the Chinese would ask nothing better than an opportunity of shaking them off.

We stopped two days at Kin-tcheou, to afford our shipwrecked men time for rest, and for restoring, as well as they could, their lost equipments. With the authorities of the town we had only the most indispensable intercourse. As their attention was entirely occupied by the serious events that had taken place, we did not wish to disturb them; but we succeeded in inducing them to in-

demnify the people of our escort, who had lost their baggage in the Blue River; and they did so with such unexpected generosity, that the men found themselves richer than they had been before.

Our last voyage had been so unfortunate that no one had the least wish to make another attempt of the kind; even Master Ting himself thought it prudent to restrain his accumulative ardour; he seemed to doubt whether the profits he should realise would compensate him for the twofold danger of drowning and sea-sickness, and to consider that small and sure gains on dry land were, on the whole, a better thing. The Mandarins of Kin-tcheou, also, would have scarcely been willing we should embark, for fear of falling into the same trouble as the Prefect of Song-tche-hien. We ourselves, though we had found travelling by water rather less fatiguing than by land, were persuaded that the dangers and inconveniences were pretty equally balanced. We agreed to continue our journey, either in a boat or a palanquin, as Master Ting thought proper, and the final decision was for the palanquin.

We left the town of Kin-tcheou in much the same state as we had found it on our arrival: — its commercial movement was not yet restored; the shops remained half closed, and the small number of inhabitants we met in the streets looked full of distress and discontent. This sullen and gloomy expression did not, however, extend beyond the limits of the town. Outside the walls we found the Chinese as gay, alert, and busy as usual; in the country every one was going about his work, seeming to care very little about the quarrel of the nautical games, and all nature looked smiling and gracious, as if to make us forget the sad and anxious aspect of the town; the flowers, still glittering with dew, were expanding in the first rays of the sun; the birds were frolicking among the leaves, or, perched upon a branch apart, were greeting each other with delicious melody. All along the road we met groups of little Chinese children, with large straw hats, leading goats, asses or enormous buffaloes, to feed on the grass that grew in the ditches. You could hear the prattling of the little creatures quite far off, and see them capering and jumping, some trying to climb on the backs of the buffaloes, and seat themselves astride there, others teasing the animal, to induce him to throw off the little successful cavalier, without at all troubling themselves with the quarrels of the Mantchoo and Tartar races. When our palanquins came up, they assumed a grave modest attitude and preserved a perfect silence; but it was easy to see arch and mischievous glances through all their demure looks, and as soon as ever we had passed, they resumed their gambols, even more noisily than before. After

our disagreeable adventures on the Blue River, and the two days passed in a town still agitated by civil discord, the aspect of the beautiful country, always delightful enough, seemed really to do us good, and the sweetness and serenity of the air to pass into our thoughts.

This pleasant state of mind did not, however, last longer than the expansion of the flowers of the field. What a strange mixture of energy and weakness is the heart of man! If it requires little to elevate and strengthen it, a breath also is sufficient to cast it down. The sight of the country, and the delightful freshness of the morning, had seemed to give us new life; yet as soon as the heat of the sun, and the weight of the atmosphere, had bowed down the plants and withered the flowers, we also fell into dejection. By degrees, as the air and the earth became heated, the breeze that had been blowing in the morning died away, and towards noon was entirely gone, and we seemed to be actually breathing fire. Even the Chinese, accustomed as they are to these terrible heats, were almost suffocated. From time to time we went to rest in the shade of large trees that we came to at the road-side; but, wherever we went, we found ourselves in a furnace, and even in the shade there was scarcely a perceptible difference.

This frightful day was followed by a night still more fatiguing, except that the weather had somewhat cooled; for we were tormented incessantly by swarms of mosquitoes, which turned our hours of rest into hours of torture.

We were now in a flat, damp, marshy country, where these abominable insects increase and multiply in an incredible manner; and as they too dread the great heats, they go in the middle of the day to take refuge among the grass at the borders of water, or in the darkest recesses of the woods; but when the night comes, they issue from their lair, wrathful and hungry, and throw themselves with fury on their unhappy victims. It is impossible to protect one's self from them, for they can insinuate themselves into the smallest openings, and the mosquito net soon becomes loaded with them. Those who have ever had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with these creatures will know what it is to pass a night in their company. There was every sign that this weather would last for several days, and we felt so incapable of continuing the journey in such a season, that we resolved to stop at the first convenient station, and allow this tremendous heat to pass before proceeding farther. We were on the point of announcing that plan to our conductors, when our servant was inspired with a grand idea.

"It seems to me," said he, "that for several days past you have not been very comfortable."

"You are right, Wei-chan," we replied; "we are suffering very much. Our strength is quite exhausted."

"Who can doubt it? When one has great fatigue in the day, and no rest at night, where should the strength come from? This is the season at which the rays of the sun and the stings of mosquitoes are most terrible; but we might easily protect ourselves from both one and the other."

"Do you really think we could find any way to manage that?"

"Yes; and a very simple one; one that the mosquitoes themselves have taught me. These insects sleep in the day and travel at night. Why shouldn't we do so too? By that means, we should avoid both the sun and the mosquitoes." The idea seemed excellent.

"Capital!" said we; "why you are quite a man of resources. Your advice is as wise as it is simple, and you shall see that this very evening we will put it in practice."

The moment when Wei-chan received this sudden illumination was, perhaps, the hottest of the day, and we were seated in the vestibule of the little pagoda of a village. We had made the half of our day's journey, and were resting a little before going on; while the peasants of the place hastened to bring us provisions, and to profit by our passage to earn a few sapecks. Whilst we were seeking to extinguish the fire that consumed us by swallowing great cups of tea, and chewing pieces of sugar-cane, our Mandarins were refreshing themselves with smoking opium in a narrow cell belonging to a Bonze. The soldiers and the palanquin bearers, stretched at the road side, were sleeping soundly under the burning rays of the sun; and our servant was alone with us, under the shadow of the broad roofed pagoda, when he communicated his admirable plan.

As soon as we reached the station where we were to pass the night, we communicated our project to Ting, and to the first magistrate of the place. At first, of course, it met with opposition. It was a very bad thing to travel after twilight—it was quite unusual—it was turning night into day, and day into night, &c. They could not help seeing that there were great advantages in the innovation; but what would people think? What would people say? All that we could allege went for nothing against this powerful argument.

We bethought ourselves, however, of a very simple method of bringing the magistrate over to our side, which was to say very gravely that since we found it impossible to travel in the middle

of the day in this summer heat, we should, if we did not travel at night, have to wait for the cooler days of autumn : but we gave him at the same time to understand, that we came from a country where it was the custom to travel by night more than by day, and we did not at all like having to break through our established customs. This argument was found sufficient, and an *estafette* was immediately mounted and sent off, to give notice along the road that in future we should do the stages by night.

Many people in Europe imagine in the Chinese character the calmness and gravity of the philosopher, but we have always found in it, on the contrary, the lightness and versatility of the child. Thus in the present case the people of our escort had appeared generally repugnant to our new plan of travelling ; but no sooner was our determination taken, and it was settled that we should begin this very evening, when everybody was full of impatience. Mandarins and soldiers laughed, sung, frolicked, and promised themselves infinite pleasure. They would hardly give themselves time to take their evening meal, or make the necessary preparations; every moment they came to tell us it was dark, and to ask whether we should not set off. Master Ting burst abruptly into the room into which we had retired to say our prayers, and throwing down at our feet with great noise a bundle of pieces of wood that he had been carrying on his shoulders, exclaimed, "There! there's a fine collection of torches of resinous wood to light us on our way;" and as he spoke, he fairly jumped about with joy, like a little child. We pointed out to him, however, that he was disturbing us, and then he took up his bundle again and went away.

At last, towards ten o'clock in the evening, we quitted the Communal Palace. As we passed through the streets of the town, our manner of travelling did not seem at all extraordinary. The Chinese streets are so well lighted up with lanterns of all sizes, shapes, and colours, that the little illumination we carried with us became mingled with the other numerous lights by which our eyes were almost dazzled. When we got out into the country, however, we could contemplate at our ease our own splendour, without being distracted by the lanterns of the public, and the varied and fantastic spectacle that was displayed all along the road delighted us for a long time.

The horsemen who led the march were furnished with large torches that cast a red light with abundance of smoke; then came the foot passengers, each with his own lantern, of peculiar form and dimension, and the palanquins were also illuminated by four

red lanterns suspended to the four corners of their canopy. All these lights, rising and sinking with the inequalities of the ground, crossing each other in all directions, according to the movements of the travellers, presented such an amusing spectacle that we never noticed the length of the way: and the gleaming lights from our grand illumination, falling on and partially lighting up farms, and corn-fields, and trees, and every object on the road, produced the most singular and striking effects. All the caravan was in the highest spirits; they sung, they joked, they amused themselves with letting off crackers, and firing rockets into the air, for in China there is no such thing as happiness without fire-works. Our servant Wei-chan was, as it was fair he should be, the happiest of the whole band. He came from time to time frisking about our palanquin, and we never failed to give him what he was looking for, repeated compliments on his happy discovery.

Never, in fact, had we seen a journey performed with more pleasure, and, besides the perpetual amusement of the spectacle, we rejoiced in a tolerably pleasant temperature; the night was not very cool, but at least it was possible to breathe. Towards one o'clock in the morning we saw advancing towards us an illumination a good deal resembling our own, except the resinous torches; and presently the two became mingled and confounded with one another. We had reached a little town where we were to stop to dine, and the magistrate of the place, who was expecting us, had sent all the lantern-bearers of his tribunal to increase our escort. The matter had been so well arranged that there was not a moment's delay. We found the dinner quite ready: every one had an excellent appetite, and after having saluted the functionaries who had come to bear us company, we resumed our nocturnal peregrination.

We arrived at the next stage before sun-rise, and as soon as we were installed in the Communal Palace, we received the visits of the Mandarins, and then, without troubling ourselves to ask what o'clock it was, we supped in a manner that might not have led any one to suppose we had dined very well at one o'clock in the morning.

The time having come, at which, as we were told, the mosquitoes are in the habit of going to bed, we prepared to go to bed also, and the observation of Wei-chan proved to be extremely accurate, for these redoubtable insects, after having vagabondised all night, have, doubtless, need of repose; and they allowed us to sleep soundly and peaceably till the end of the day. We continued to follow this

new plan of travelling, and found ourselves all the better for it; but our strength had been so completely exhausted by the long duration of our fatigues, that at Kuen-kiang-hien, a town of the third order, we fell seriously ill, and were compelled to interrupt our journey.

CHAP. XI.

Dangerous Illness. — Mandarins' Prescriptions. — Visit of the Doctor. — Theory of the Pulse. — Apothecaries in China. — Trade in Medicine. — Increase of the Malady. — Acupuncture. — The supernatural Treasure of red Pills. — Experimental Medicine. — Origin and History of the Cholera in China. — Free Practice of Medicine. — Good Effects of red Pills. — Cure. — Terrible Law of Responsibility. — Tragic Story. — Kind Attention of the Prefect of Kuen-kiang-hien. — Fondness of the Chinese for Coffins. — Journey of a sick Man by the side of his Bier. — Calmness and Tranquillity of the Chinese at the moment of Death. — Visit to our Coffin. — Departure from Kuen-kiang-hien.

It is common to say that health is the greatest blessing possessed by man here below; and in fact the enjoyments of this life are so fragile and fugitive, that they all vanish at the approach of the slightest infirmity. But for the exile, for the traveller, wandering in distant lands, health is not merely a good — it is a quite inestimable treasure — for it is a mournful and bitter thing to be attacked by illness in a foreign country, far from relations or friends, and surrounded by persons to whom you are a source of annoyance, and who only regard you with indifference, or even with aversion. What a frightful and desperate situation would it be for one who counted only on the help of man, and had the misfortune of not knowing how to find in God his support and consolation.

Our long journey — so full of vicissitudes of every kind — had hitherto been at least free from this trial. In Tartary and Thibet we had been threatened with being starved or frozen to death, devoured by wild beasts, murdered by robbers, or crushed by the fall of avalanches; a single step would often have been sufficient to plunge us from the top of a mountain into a frightful abyss.

In China, executioners had displayed before us the instruments of their atrocious tortures; an angry populace had risen in insurrection around us; and, finally, a tempest had nearly engulphed us in the waters. After having so often had death under various forms so near us, it only remained to see him standing quietly at our bed-foot, ready to take possession in the most ordinary forms

of a prey that had so often escaped him, and for two whole days it pleased God to leave before our eyes this melancholy vision.

On the very evening of our arrival at *Kuen-kiang-hien*, and whilst we were receiving the visit of the principal magistrates of the town, we were suddenly seized with violent vomitings, accompanied by most acute pains in the stomach. It seemed really as if a general decomposition were going on in our frame, from head to foot; and we were forced to go to bed. The doctor was sent for; the most renowned doctor, it was said, of the whole country; a man accustomed to perform prodigies, and cure with the greatest ease all sorts of incurable maladies. Whilst waiting the arrival of this marvellous doctor, in whom we were far from feeling the most absolute confidence, the mandarins of our escort, and those of Kuen-kiang-hien, discoursed with much learning and *sang-froid* on the cause of our illness, and the means to be employed for its cure.

We have said that the Chinese were, in virtue of their temperament, essentially actors and cooks; we may add also that they are something of doctors. Every one of the company delivered his opinion of our condition in the most technical terms, and it was settled by the obliging members of this impromptu consultation that our "noble and illustrious malady proceeded from a disturbance in the equilibrium of the vital spirits." The igneous principle, they thought, too long fed by the excessive heat, had ended by exceeding beyond all measure the proper bounds assigned to it, and that, consequently, a fire, so to speak, had been kindled in the sublime organization of our body. Consequently also the aqueous elements had been dried up to such a degree that there no longer remained to the members and organs the humidity necessary to the performance of their natural functions; thence proceeded those vomitings, those pains in the stomach, and that generally disordered state which it was easy to perceive in our face, and which produced such violent contortions.

In order to re-establish the said equilibrium there needed only to be introduced into the body a certain quantity of cold, and to lower the extravagant temperature of this igneous principle; therefore it was necessary to favour the return of moisture into all the members. In this manner health would be immediately re-established, and we might resume our journey; being, however, very careful not to permit the igneous principle to develope itself to the point of absorbing the aqueous principle. There was a very simple method of bringing back into the body this beautiful harmony. Everybody knew that green peas are of an extremely

cold nature; a certain quantity was therefore to be put on to boil, we were to drink the liquor, and by that means the fire would be put out.

A mandarin of Kuen-kiang-hien suggested that nevertheless we must use this liquor with great moderation, for fear of occasioning too great a chill; but Master Ting interposed, saying that we might, without any danger, take twice the ordinary dose of it, as he had remarked that our temperament was incomparably warmer than that of a Chinese. It was also decided that for this purpose of restoring the humidity necessary for the harmonious action of the organs, there was nothing better than boiled cucumbers and water melons.

It was finally therefore agreed unanimously, that nothing more was necessary than green peas, boiled cucumbers, and water melons, to set us on our feet again, and enable us to pursue our journey; and in the meantime the doctor arrived. The ceremonious, yet perfectly easy manner in which he presented himself pointed him out as a man who passed his time in paying visits. He was a little roundabout man with a pleasing countenance, and of a redundant plumpness calculated to afford the most advantageous ideas of his hygeienic principles: and a pair of great spectacles seated on a very little rudimentary kind of nose, and tied behind his ears with a silk cord, gave him quite a finished medical air. A small grey beard and moustachios, and hair of the same colour tied behind in a pig-tail, afforded additional evidence of long experience in the art of healing. As he approached our bed, he gave utterance to some aphorisms that did not seem to us altogether worthless.

"I have learned," said he, "that the illustrious patient was born in the countries of the west. It is written in the books that maladies vary according to the country; those of the north do not resemble those of the south; every nation has some that are peculiar to it, and every country produces particular remedies, adapted to the ordinary infirmities of its inhabitants. The skilful physician ought to distinguish different temperaments, in order to understand the true character of maladies and prescribe suitable medicaments; it is in this that his science consists. We must take good care not to treat the men of the Western Seas in the same manner as the men of the central nation." After having laid down these principles, with very striking inflections of voice, and abundance of gesticulation, he drew towards him a bamboo arm-chair and seated himself by the side of our bed. He then asked for our right arm, and having laid it on a small cushion he began

to feel the pulse by playing on it with all his fingers as if he were playing the pianoforte. The Chinese consider that there are different pulses corresponding to the heart, the liver, and the other principal organs. To feel the pulse well you must feel them all one after the other, and sometimes several together, in order to understand their several relations. During this operation, which lasted a very long while, the doctor appeared plunged in profound meditation; he did not speak one word, but kept his head bent down, and his eyes fixed on the points of his shoes.

When the right arm had had its turn, the left was taken, and the same ceremonies performed with it; and then at length the doctor majestically raised his head, stroked his beard and moustachios two or three times, and pronounced the sentence: "By some means or other," said he, shaking his head, "the cold air has penetrated into the interior, and has put itself in opposition, in many of the organs, with the igneous principle; thence arises the struggle, which must necessarily manifest itself by vomitings and convulsions; we must therefore combat the evil with warm substances."

The mandarins, who a minute before had said precisely the contrary, did not fail to agree entirely with the opinion of the physician.

"That's the thing," said Ting: "it is evident there is a struggle between the cold and the heat; these two principles are not in harmony, and what is wanted is to make them agree; that's just what we were thinking." The physician then went on: "The nature of this noble malady is such that it may yield with facility to the virtue of the medicines, and disappear very soon; and, also, it is quite possible that it may resist, and that the danger may increase. This is my opinion on the subject after having studied the various characters of the pulse."

This opinion did not appear to us an extremely hazardous one, or likely in any case to compromise seriously the person who delivered it. "You must have rest and quiet," continued the doctor, "and take every hour a dose of the medicine I am going to prescribe." As he spoke he rose, and went to seat himself at a little table, where writing materials had been prepared. The learned man then dipped in a cup of tea the end of a little stick of Indian ink, which he rubbed on a dish of black stone, then seized a pencil, and began to trace the prescription on a large sheet of paper. He wrote a large page, and when he had finished, he took his paper, read it again attentively in a low voice, and then came to us and communicated its contents. He placed the prescription under our

eyes, then extending towards it the first finger of his right hand, terminated by a nail of frightful length, he pointed to the characters he had just written, and gave us by degrees a full explanation of them. We did not understand much of what he said, for the violent headache with which we were tormented hindered us from following the thread of his learned dissertation on the properties and virtues of the numerous ingredients that went to compose the medicine; besides, the little attention of which we were capable was entirely absorbed by the sight of that prodigious nail, that went wandering over the mass of Chinese characters. We made out, however, that the basis of the remedy was rhubarb and orange peel, *tahoang* and *kapi;* besides these articles, a variety of powders, leaves, and roots were to enter into its composition. Each kind of drug was specially charged to act on a particular organ, in order to bring about the desired result, and the aggregate of their operations to effect the prompt re-establishment of our health.

It is customary to boil the drugs together in a vase of baked clay; and when the water has, by a long ebullition, sufficiently assimilated their medicinal properties, the patient is made to swallow it as hot as possible. Chinese medicine is almost always of an oily nature, and of a very dark yellowish colour; this very uninviting appearance proceeds from a certain fatty black substance that the physicians have the good taste to introduce into all their prescriptions; however, if one can get over the unpleasant look of them, these medicines are seldom very difficult to take; they have mostly an insipid sweetish taste, and are never so abominably nauseous as some of the compositions of our European pharmacists, which turn your very heart, and make your whole inner man rise in violent rebellion.

When the Chinese M. D. had fulfilled his mission with respect to our "noble and illustrious malady," and made a number of profound bows to the company, he departed, promising to come back the next morning. The mandarins of Kuen-kiang-hien went also, and in very sorrowful mood, for the physician had said positively, that we needed repose, and our condition also seemed bad enough to make it probable that we should have to make a pretty long stay, even if we were not obliged to take up our final abode at the foot of one of their mountains. All these considerations could not but cause them much anxiety.

When all the strangers were gone, Master Ting asked us whether it was necessary to follow the doctor's prescription, and prepare the medicine he had ordered. The fact was, that we had no great

confidence either in the drugs or the doctor; but where were we to find a better? To whom could we apply for help in these melancholy circumstances? Only to the great Master of life and death, whom it has pleased to bestow on plants certain marvellous properties, by which they contribute to the solace of human infirmities; he might therefore grant to these drugs, insignificant as they might be, a special virtue, if it should be his good pleasure that we should recover our health.

In the Holy Scriptures we are told to honour physicians in case of necessity; and we could have no better opportunity for that than the present. Let us therefore, we thought, honour the Chinese doctor, and scrupulously obey his orders. "Yes certainly," we replied to Master Ting's question; "the medicine must be prepared as he has ordered."

A servant of the Communal Palace was sent to get the ingredients to the house of the doctor himself, who had just made up the prescription. In China, the physicians are at the same time apothecaries, and sell to their patients the remedies they prescribe; but although these two professions are intimately connected with one another, and in themselves by no means incompatible, there are some objections to their being exercised by the same individual. Some abuses may easily enter into the exercise of functions that support each other so completely — as, for instance, human frailty considered, the physician may yield to the temptation of prescribing costly remedies, or even sometimes of prolonging the malady for the purpose of procuring more considerable profits for his friend the apothecary. The prodigious quantity of drugs that enter into the composition of Chinese medicines has indeed always appeared to us rather surprising; and we would not venture to say that the circumstance is not to be accounted for from the fact we have mentioned of their being prescribed and sold by the same person.

The fear of being fleeced by the doctor has given rise to a curious custom, quite in accordance with Chinese manners. The physician and the patient usually enter into an earnest discussion concerning the value and price of the medicines ordered. The other members of the family too take part in this odd sort of bargaining; they ask the doctor to prescribe common cheap drugs, and they examine the prescription, and strike out such as are too expensive. Possibly the effect of the medicine may be thereby rendered slow or doubtful, but they will put up with that, and run the risk. They always hope, too, that the alteration will not be of much consequence, and that it will be pretty much the same in the end. In fact, the great recommendation of Chinese practice is, that one prescription is

about as good as another, and that whether you absorb a little more or less of their black brewages will probably make very little difference.

The physician, after having haggled for a long time, generally ends by abating something of the price of his merchandise, for the simple reason that if he did not, the patient would go to another shop.

Very surprising and very *Chinese* scenes, however, sometimes occur with reference to these cases. When the physician-apothecary has said his last word, and declared positively that to obtain the cure it is indispensably necessary to make use of this or that remedy, a family council is held, actually in the presence of the sick person, in which the question of life or death is coolly put, and frequently arguments brought forward to show that, considering the advanced age of the patient, or the hopeless nature of the malady, it may be better not to incur a useless expense, but quietly to allow things to take their course. After having closely calculated what it will cost to buy these possibly useless medicines, it is not uncommon for the sick man himself to take the initiative, and decide that it will be much better to reserve the money to buy a fine coffin, since one must die sooner or later, and it is well worth while to give perhaps a short remnant of life in order to have a handsome funeral. With this sweet and consoling prospect in view, they send away the doctor, and — the sitting being prolonged — send for the undertaker. Such are the thoughts and cares that occupy the mind of a Chinese in the presence of death.

Fortunately for us we had no occasion to enter into these intricate calculations, since it was the business of the mandarins to provide us with medicines, or, in case of need, with a coffin. We were even assured beforehand that they would have the politeness to place us in one of superior quality; and being thus made perfectly easy in our minds on this important point, we had nothing to do but quietly to swallow all the drugs offered to us, without even asking what they cost. Never had a doctor of Kuen-kiang-hien a better patient.

The efficacy of the medicine, however, by no means corresponded with our generosity of behaviour; we cannot say whether it did good or harm, or maintained a prudent neutrality, and left us to get well or not as we thought proper; all that we know is, that on the following morning we were in a very dangerous state. Then came more medicines, and also more illness; a consuming fever; a distracting headache, a dry and burning skin, and fierce pains in the bowels: such were the principal symptoms. The doctor never

left us, for the worthy man's pride was now concerned. To find himself engaged in a battle with the astonishing organisation of a devil of the western seas; to vanquish such an obstinate, unreasonable, atrocious kind of malady, the like of which had never been seen among the inhabitants of the celestial empire, that would assuredly be a feat that could not fail to cover the doctor with glory. On the following day we did not know much of what was passing in the room we occupied in the Communal Palace of Kuen-kiang-hien. Our brains became a chaos in which France, China, Tartary, and Thibet were blended and mingled into an inextricable entanglement of all that was absurd and monstrous; persons the most incongruous, too, were brought together by the wild extravagances of our delirious imagination, and made to hold all sorts of impossible conversations. In the evening, however, our understanding became clear enough to make out that the physician was speaking of the operation of *acupuncture*, whereupon we clenched our fist, and looked at him in such fierce wrath, that he drew back in a fright. This manner of explaining our opinion of the matter was not, we must own, quite in accordance with the Rites, but under the circumstances, and seeing that the disease scarcely left us a full consciousness of our actions, it may perhaps be deemed excusable.

This operation of *acupuncture* was invented in China in a period of the remotest antiquity, and afterwards passed into Japan. It is in frequent use in both countries, for the cure of many diseases, and is performed by introducing into the body long metallic needles, the whole science of the operator consisting in the choice of the places where he will poke them in, and in the knowledge of the depth to which they may penetrate, and the direction they ought to follow. In some cases the needles are made red hot. Very wonderful cures are said to have been performed by this method, but one must really be born in Japan or China to submit to have one's body made into a pincushion.

Acupuncture has been, at different periods, much the fashion in Europe. This is what M. Abel Remusat wrote on the subject in 1825: — "Acupuncture has from the remotest antiquity formed one of the principal curative methods of Chinese and Japanese medicine; it has also been practised in Europe for several years, and for these few months much extolled in France. Like everything new and singular, this mode of proceeding has found both detractors and enthusiastic admirers. Some have seen in it a sort of panacea of marvellous efficacy; others an unmeaning operation, that might sometimes be highly dangerous. Facts have been

cited on both sides; and as the opportunities for observation of it in Europe could not be very frequent or numerous, reference has been made to the experience of Asiatics, usually so much disdained in matters of science. Independently of academical essays, and articles in periodicals, some small works have been printed, capable of throwing light on this interesting point of therapeutics and physiology."

Several celebrated physicians and natural philosophers — among others, MM. Morand, J. Cloquet, and Pouillet — made at that time repeated experiments in acupuncture. In studying the manner in which the needles act on a living body, they had been induced to think that the cause of pain was the accumulation of the electric fluid in the part that is the seat of it, and that the introduction of the needle might favour its discharge. The needle, in this hypothesis, was a real lightning conductor introduced into the body of the patient; and the immediate, indeed instantaneous relief he felt, led naturally to the comparison of this physiological action with the phenomena that take place when a surface, charged with electricity, is put in relation with other bodies by means of a metallic conductor. It was even thought that on touching the needle about ten minutes after its introduction a slight shock was felt, like that produced by a very feeble voltaic pile. Thus an attempt was made to explain, at the same time, the cause of the affection as consisting in an accumulation of the electric fluid on a nervous branch, and the curative effect produced by the simple subtraction of the fluid. It had been subsequently ascertained from the experiments of M. Pouillet, that electric action did really take place on the introduction of a needle into a muscle affected with rheumatism ; but that this action was not due to the pain, or the cause of the pain, since it took place equally when acupuncture was practised on a part that was not the seat of any neuralgic affection. It had been stated that this action took place in the same manner with animals, and that it constantly co-existed with the oxidation of the metal. It was demonstrated, that it was never excited by a needle of platina, gold, or silver, but only by those made of oxidable metals. It is therefore allowable to conclude that the physical phenomenon observed is the result of chemical action between the metal of the needle and the parts with which it is brought into contact ; for there is never any oxidation of metal without a development of electricity, and it is nearly certain that this current is of no effect in the relief felt by the sufferer.

As to the physiological effects of acupuncture, independently of

the relief afforded, which has been remarked, especially in cases of rheumatism or neuralgia, they have mostly been observed to be the following. The introduction of the needle is not very painful, if care is previously taken to distend the skin, and if the needle is turned, instead of being driven straight forward. In general, its extraction is more painful than its introduction; there issues very little blood from the puncture; at most, only a few drops. The skin rises round the instrument, preserving its natural colour; but it soon sinks again, and there is formed a red circle round it. The sick person then feels shootings directed towards the part; muscular contractions take place; numbness, following the course of the great trunks of the nerves; and feverish shiverings. It is not uncommon to see a sweat break out over the part corresponding with the seat of pain; and in that case it has ceased, or at all events become diminished, or has shifted its place. Towards this time there have come faintings, more or less complete, and more or less durable, and which can scarcely be attributed to the pain of the puncture, since they have taken place when the painful sensation has ceased. This, it appears, is the only accident ever known to result from acupuncture. There might be, perhaps, cause to fear serious wounds and fatal consequences if the needle should traverse the great nervous trunks, or the organs essential to life. Some surgeons have asserted that the extreme fineness of the needle was a sufficient guarantee against consequences of this kind; but although in experiments made on animals, it has been found possible to pierce with them the stomach, the lungs, and even the heart, without any bad result, it is, nevertheless, certain that such attempts might occasion an irreparable misfortune.

The Chinese and Japanese doctors, being ignorant of anatomy, and having only the most vague and erroneous ideas on the subject of the organisation of the human frame, must often meet with fatal accidents; but acupuncture is not practised among them without rule and method, nor entirely according to the caprice of the practitioners.

They have determined on the surface of the human body three hundred and sixty-seven points to which they have given particular names, according to the relation in which they suppose them to stand with the internal parts; and in order to obtain practice without compromising human health, they have fabricated small copper figures, on which very small holes are made in the proper places; the surface of the figure is then covered with paper pasted on, and the student is required to place his needle without hesitation upon the spot where the opening is made, and on which he

would be required to operate according to the affection he is examined upon.

"But what can all these precautions avail," says M. Abel Remusat, in speaking of a Japanese book on Acupuncture, "in the profound ignorance of the practitioner as to the situation and connection of the various organs? They regulate their practice solely on the principles of a blind routine, or the still more absurd theories of a fantastic physiology, which may be traced both in the general and particular precepts that the Japanese author has here collected. They set out on the principle that the arteries always proceed from above to below, the veins always from below to above. It is, therefore, prescribed, in performing the operation, to turn the point of the needle upward when it is wished to go counter to the course of the blood, and downwards if you desire to proceed with it. An unseasonable or awkward puncture is to be corrected by making punctures on other corresponding points; and half the prescriptions in the book are worthy of the sagacity of this. In a syncope following a severe fall, the upper part of the throat, opposite the larynx, is to be punctured to the depth of eight lines. In pains in the loins, the hams are to be punctured; in dry coughs, the external and hinder part of the arm, to a depth of one line, or in the middle of the front of the arm, or at the base of the little finger. In considering how distant these parts are one from another, it has been supposed that the Japanese physicians sought to act by derivation; but that, in my opinion, is to do them too much honour, by attributing to them so clear an idea of revulsion. In this instance, as in so many others, they are probably only acting at random, on the suggestions of an ignorant and credulous empiricism.

"I will not take upon me, nevertheless, to pronounce a decided judgment upon Japanese medical doctrines, from a small unauthorised work, whose contents, perhaps, would not receive the approval of their really skilful medical men, if any such are to be found in Japan. There are works on medicine and surgery among us which would not give a very favourable idea of our progress in these sciences, if they should be taken up at random from our libraries and sent off to China as a specimen. In the King's Library in Paris there is a little treatise on Acupuncture in Chinese, and the rules found in it do not agree with those of the Japanese. What may be said in praise of the physicians of both countries is, that in the application both of the needle and the *moxa*, they seem to have been guided by long practice, and that the points assigned for the operation are not always as ill chosen

as those above mentioned. They seem also to have been enlightened by experience as to the danger of introducing the needles above the principal nerves of the great arterial trunks and the vital organs; but it is probable that their experience on these points has cost the lives of a great number of patients."

We entertained precisely the same opinion on this matter as M. Abel Remusat, at the moment when it was proposed to stick needles into our own body; the operations of this kind that we had witnessed by no means tended to re-assure us sufficiently, although they had been what is called successful; and we felt no desire to contribute at our own expense to the progress of the art of acupuncture in the Chinese Empire. The doctor comprehended immediately the figurative language by which we had expressed our aversion to the introduction of the needles; and he did not insist on it, as Master Ting, with extreme sagacity, suggested that, as Europeans were not organised at all in the same manner as the Chinese, he might run the risk of sticking them in the wrong place. "What rashness!" he cried; "do we know how these Europeans are made? Who can tell what they have in their bodies? How do you know, doctor, what you would be sticking your needle into?" The doctor admitted, or feigned to admit, the cogency of Master Ting's reasoning; and it was settled that we should go back to our black broth, with certain modifications.

The night was a good deal better than the day had been; and in the morning the physician reappeared, and found us, he said, extremely well prepared to take a most decisive remedy, the good effect of which was certain. The cure would be immediate and radical, and assuredly we could not require more. The preparation of this miraculous medicine required very little time or trouble; the doctor having asked for half a cup of tea, threw into it a dozen of minute red pills, scarcely the size of a pin's head, real homœopathic globules. As soon as we had swallowed this tea, which, by the addition of these globules had acquired a strong odour of musk, everybody was ordered out of the room, that we might be left in perfect quiet; and though we certainly cannot affirm that this mode of treatment contributed to our relief or our cure, it is certain that we soon afterwards felt much better, and that the improvement went on during all the rest of the day.

In the evening we took six more red globules, and the next day we were decidedly convalescent, though still excessively weak; the malady had disappeared, there were no more convulsions, or headaches, or pains in the stomach;—and who so proud as our doctor? He harangued the company with the most perfect con-

fidence on all imaginable subjects, and they vied with each other in applauding every word that came out of his mouth. Especially he did not fail to dwell on the infallible efficacy of this red medicine, when administered in due season, and according to the rules of prudence and wisdom, — two virtues which heaven had been pleased to confer upon him in the most supreme degree.

These red pills, to which every one attributed our cure, were not for us an unknown medicine, for they enjoy a prodigious celebrity in China, and we had heard them everywhere extolled. The pompous and emphatic name that they bear is equal to their reputation. They are called *ling-pao-you-y-tan*, that is to say, "Supernatural treasure for all desires." It is said to be a true universal panacea, curing all kinds of maladies without any exception: the great difficulty consists in varying the dose, and combining it with a suitable liquid. Administered in an improper manner, this remedy may, it is said, become dangerous, and cause terrible infirmities. The composition of it is a secret, in possession of a single family in Pekin, in which it has been faithfully transmitted from generation to generation; it is, therefore, impossible to mention the ingredients; its smell of musk, though very powerful, need not be considered as anything characteristic, since in China, not only the medicines, but also every other object, the people, the land, the air, all are more or less impregnated with this particular odour. The whole Chinese Empire smells of musk, and the merchandise imported thence to Europe retains the smell for a long time.

This supernatural treasure, although manufactured only by the one family in Pekin, is known all over the Empire, and can usually be bought at a moderate price; but it is necessary to be careful to get it unadulterated, which in China is no very easy thing. At Pekin the price has never varied: it is the same as that of pure silver. One day we ourselves went to buy some in one of the principal shops, and we had only to place in one scale a small ingot of silver, and the merchant put in the other an equal weight of red pills.

The supernatural treasure is perhaps the most active sudorific existing; but it acts in a quite peculiar manner. A single one of these little red globules reduced to powder, and put up the nose like snuff, occasions a long succession of sneezing, until the whole body breaks out into violent perspiration. This powder is sometimes used to ascertain if a sick person is near the point of death. If a pinch cannot make him sneeze, the Chinese say he will certainly die in a day; if he sneezes once, he will at all events not

die till the morrow, and the hope increases in the precise ratio of the number of sneezings.

Chinese medicine is remarkable for the extreme whimsicality of its modes of procedure, and the collection of books in which it may be studied is very considerable; but they contain for the most part few recipes but such as are already more or less known. Europeans would of course find in them nothing interesting in a scientific point of view; but it would be a mistake to treat them with perfect contempt. The Chinese are endowed with prodigious powers of observation; they have much penetration and sagacity, and often notice many small, but not unimportant circumstances, to which minds superior to theirs might be apt to pay no attention. The antiquity of their civilisation, too, and their habit of collecting and preserving in writing the most important discoveries, must have put them in possession of an immense mass of useful facts.

We have never had the honour to study medicine ourselves; but we have often heard it maintained by learned and skilful physicians, that the art of curing human maladies was less a matter of science than of experience and observation. Sickness and infirmity is the mournful inheritance of humanity in all countries, and at all epochs; is it not reasonable to suppose that God has always placed it within the power of man to discover the means of relieving his sufferings, and preserving his health? The most uncivilised nations, savages even, have often been found in possession of certain remedies, which science not only could never have invented, but of which it could not even explain the effects.

There are in China at least as many maladies as there are elsewhere; yet mortality is not proportionably greater than in other countries. Its immense and exuberant population may be considered to afford a proof that, on the whole, Chinese doctors are not in practice much more awkward and unskilful than their brethren in Europe. Neither the one nor the other has yet been able to compound a good elixir of immortality, although both had the weakness to labour to discover such a one for many centuries: the Chinese find means, however, to live as long as we do, and octogenarians are as numerous among them as among us. We are, indeed, far from envying the Chinese their system of medicine, which it must be owned borders closely on quackery; we would only assert the probability of their possessing curative methods proportioned to their necessities. We have even seen instances of their treating, with great success, diseases that would be considered very formidable by our medical faculty. There is no missionary who in his apostolic career may not have witnessed facts of this

kind, capable of exciting his surprise and admiration. When a physician has succeeded in curing promptly and radically a malady presenting the most grave and dangerous symptoms, it is to little purpose to pass a learned condemnation on the methods he has employed, and endeavour to prove their inefficiency. The sick man has been healed — he is again in the enjoyment of perfect health — that is the essential point. There are few people who would not prefer being saved in the most irregular and stupid manner to being killed according to the most approved and scientific methods.

It is indisputable, for instance, that there exist in China medical men who know how to treat the most decided cases of hydrophobia; and it matters little that during their treatment of this frightful malady, they expressly forbid any object containing hemp to be shown to the patient, under the idea that that would neutralise the effect of the remedies.

For several years we had for one of our catechists a man who had the precious gift of being able to set fractured limbs. We have seen him operate upon and cure with extraordinary facility more than fifty unfortunate men, whose bones were broken and even crushed. The operation always succeeded so well that the patients used to come themselves to thank him, to the chamber that he occupied beside ours, and in the presence of such results, we never felt inclined to laugh, because the plaster he employed to promote the junction of the bones was made of wood lice, white pepper, and a fowl pounded to death.

In 1840, we had in our seminary at Macao a young Chinese, who was about to be sent back to his family, on account of the complete deafness by which he had been for some months affected, and which did not permit him to continue his studies. Several medical authorities, Chinese, Portuguese, English, and French had been consulted in vain concerning this infirmity. The doctors explained in technical language the mechanism of hearing; they said wonderful things about it that did honour to the profundity of their knowledge; but their treatment remained ineffectual, and the deafness was declared incurable.

Fortunately we had in our house a Christian recently arrived from our mission in the neighbourhood of Pekin. He was neither a doctor nor a man of learning; nor did he possess any literary degree. He was simply a very poor peasant; but he recollected having noticed that the people of his country employed a certain plant with success in the cure of deafness. After diligent searching in the environs of Macao, he had the good fortune to find some

of this salutary herb, and he expressed the juice of some of the leaves into the ears of the sick man, from which an immense quantity of humour was immediately discharged, and in two days the cure was complete. The young Chinese was enabled to continue his studies, and is at present a missionary in one of the southern provinces.*

The Chinese have some maladies peculiar to themselves, and not known elsewhere; as there exist several which make great ravages in Europe, and are in China unknown. Some are common to both the east and the west, and the method of curing them is no better understood in the one quarter of the world than the other. Phthisis, for example, is considered incurable by the Chinese physicians, and also the cholera. This terrible malady manifested itself first in China, then spread to the other countries of Asia, and afterwards reached Europe. It was under the following circumstances this formidable scourge, formerly unknown, made its first appearance. We have the account from a great number of the inhabitants of the province of *Chan-tong*, who were eye-witnesses of what they related.

In the first year of the reign of the deceased Emperor—that is to say in the year 1820,—a mass of reddish vapour was noticed one day upon the surface of the Yellow Sea. This singular phenomenon was observed by the Chinese of the province of Chan-tong, which forms its coast. These vapours were at first light, but gradually increased, became condensed, rose little by little above the surface of the water, and at last formed an immense red cloud, which remained for several hours floating in the air. The Chinese were seized with terror, as they mostly are in the presence of all great natural phenomena, and sought in certain superstitious practices of the Bonzes the means of averting the threatened calamity.

They burned vast quantities of magic paper, which they threw all flaming into the sea. They formed long processions in which they bore the image of the Great Dragon; for they of course attributed these sinister omens to the anger of that fabulous personage. At last they had recourse to an extreme measure only adopted in desperate cases: they executed a tremendous charivari all along the sea coast. Men, women, and children went striking redoubled blows upon all the instruments most capable of producing a loud and sonorous noise, tam-tams, kitchen utensils, and

* We could mention on the subject of Chinese medicine a number of remarkable facts; but we abstain, because *Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable.*

metal implements of all kinds ; and the wild and savage outcries of a countless multitude of people increased the horror of this infernal uproar. We were ourselves once witnesses of a similar manifestation in one of the great towns of the south, where all the inhabitants, without exception, shut up in their houses, struck as in frenzy every metallic article within reach, uttering at the same time the most frantic and incredible vociferations. One can hardly imagine anything more frightful than this monstrous tumult arising in the bosom of a great city. Whilst the inhabitants of Chan-tong were seeking to conjure away this unknown misfortune, which yet every one foresaw, a violent wind suddenly began to blow, and, dividing the cloud into various columns, drove them on toward the land. These red vapours spread in a winding course along the hills and valleys, and swept over the towns and villages, and wherever they passed men found themselves suddenly attacked by a frightful disease, which in a moment deranged the entire organisation, and changed a living man into a hideous corpse. In vain did the doctors anxiously turn over their books; nowhere could they find any hint of this new, strange, and terrible enemy, that struck like a thunderbolt, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other,—on poor and rich, young and old, but always apparently in the most capricious manner without following any fixed rule in the midst of its fearful ravages. Numberless remedies were tried, numberless experiments made ; but entirely without success, and the implacable scourge went raging on with unabated fury, plunging whole populations into terror and mourning.

According to all that the Chinese have told us of this terrible malady it was incontestibly the cholera. It ravaged first the province of Chan-tong, then turned northwards to Pekin, striking always in its march the most populous towns. At Pekin its victims were proportionally more numerous than elsewhere. Thence the cholera crossed the Great Wall, and the Chinese say that it faded away in the Land of Grass.

It is probable that it followed the route of the caravans as far as the Russian station of Khiaktha, and that, afterwards passing through Siberia, it invaded Russia and Poland, whence it made a bound to France after the revolution of 1830, just ten years after it had issued from the bosom of the Yellow Sea.

In China every one is at full liberty to take up the profession of medicine whenever he pleases; the government does not in any way interfere with him. It is of opinion that the deep and lively interest every one takes in his own health is a sufficient guarantee that confidence will not be given to a doctor who is unworthy of

it. Thus, whoever has read a few receipt books, and learned the nomenclature of medicaments, may plunge boldly into the noble art of healing his fellow-creatures, or killing them.

Medicine, as well as education, is found to be an excellent conduit to carry off the numerous literary bachelors, who are never likely to rise to the superior degrees, and attain the honours of the Mandarinate. Thus China is swarming with doctors, and, without reckoning the amateurs, who are almost innumerable—since, as we have said, every Chinese knows more or less of medicine,—there is no village so small as not to contain several professors of the healing art. Their position is indeed far less desirable than in Europe, for, besides that there is no great honour in exercising a profession that is within the reach of every one, there is also very little to be gained by it. Visits are not usually paid for at all: medicines are sold cheap, and always on credit; whence it may reasonably be inferred that the doctor cannot count on more than a third of his nominal revenue. It is also very much the custom not to pay for medicines that have not produced a good effect, which happens pretty often, and even this is not the worst of the poor doctor's case. He is not unfrequently obliged to hide himself or fly the country, to avoid imprisonment, fines, the bamboo, or even worse punishment. This may happen when, having promised to cure a patient, he has been so awkward as to allow him to die. The relations then, without hesitation, commence a lawsuit against him, and the safest way, if the doctor have any regard for his life or his sapecks, is to take flight. It would seem that the legislature favours these severe proceedings; for the following passage occurs in the penal code of China, section 297 :—"When those who shall exercise the professions of medicine or surgery, without understanding them, and shall administer drugs or operate with a piercing or cutting instrument, in a manner contrary to established rules and practice, and that they shall thereby contribute to cause the death of the patient, the magistrate shall convoke other men of the profession to examine the nature of the remedy that they shall have administered, or the wound they shall have made, and which has been followed by the death of the patient. If it should appear that the physician or surgeon has only acted in error, and without any injurious intention, he may, by a certain payment, obtain remission of the punishment inflicted on a homicide, in the manner established for cases of killing by accident; but the physician or surgeon shall be compelled for ever to quit the profession." This last provision appears to us very sagacious, and such as might be imitated with advantage in other places.

Chinese doctors are very fond of a speciality, and occupy themselves exclusively with the treatment of certain maladies. Some devote themselves to such as proceed from cold, others to those caused by heat. Some practice acupuncture; others devote their time to broken limbs. There are also doctors for infants, doctors for women, and doctors for old men. There are some who are called "suckers of blood," and who are, in fact, living cupping-glasses. They fasten their lips hermetically on the humours and abscesses of invalids, and, by drawing in their breath, make a vacuum, and cause the blood and humours to gush into their mouths. We have seen these vampires at work, and never witnessed a more revolting spectacle. The cure of the eyes, the ears, and the feet is usually left to the barbers, who enjoy also the privilege in some of the southern provinces of fishing for frogs. Whatever may be the speciality of the Chinese doctors, however, they very rarely become rich by the exercise of their art: they live from day to day as they best can, and commonly rival their brethren the schoolmasters in privation and poverty.

From what we have said, the reader will have formed no very favourable idea of Chinese medicine. It was our business to relate frankly and freely what we knew; but we would not excite any needless prejudice against it; for it is very possible that to it, after God, we are indebted for our lives.

As soon as our cure was complete, the civil and military Mandarins of *Kuen-kiang-hien* hastened to pay us a visit in grand state, and congratulate us on the favours that heaven and earth had just granted to us. They expressed to us in the most lively manner how happy they were to see us out of danger, and on the point of recovering possession of our precious and brilliant health. This time we were persuaded that the words of the Mandarins were entirely sincere, and the true expression of their feelings, for our recovery released them from a terrible responsibility. They could not but be excessively uneasy while we were threatening to die under their jurisdiction; not, of course, that they cared whether we lived or died; but they could not doubt that our death would have occasioned them great embarrassment.

There are some special difficulties connected with the presence of a dead body in China. When an individual dies in his family there is no trouble; the relations are answerable, and no one has any right to raise doubts or suspicions concerning the causes of death. But if he lose his life out of doors, the proprietor of the place on which the body is found becomes responsible. Whether it be in a wood, in the middle of a field, on a piece of waste land,

matters not, the owner of the soil is bound to give notice and afford the necessary explanations, which, to be considered valid, must be accepted by the relations of the deceased. In that case they undertake to perform the funeral; and when once they have presided over the burial all is over. But until then the unfortunate proprietor of the land remains responsible for the life of a man, whom perhaps he has never seen nor heard of. In these circumstances terrible things sometimes happen; incredible suits are commenced in which the Mandarins and the relations of the dead resort to every device of trickery and wickedness to satiate their cupidity, and ruin their victim. They have been known to keep an unfortunate and perfectly innocent man shut up in a dungeon, with the terrors of death suspended over his head, until they have succeeded in despoiling him of all his goods.

This terrible law of responsibility, although often in practice a source of monstrous iniquities, was doubtless considered in the mind of the legislator in the light of a safeguard of human life, a salutary barrier to the outbreaks of passion. It may be conceived that in a country like China, where there exists no religious principle capable of restraining evil instincts, assassinations would take place every moment, if the blood of a man were made of small account. Draconian laws have been found necessary to restrain within the limits of duty these materialist populations living without a God, without religion, and consequently without a conscience. In order to teach them to respect the lives of their fellow-creatures, a dead body has been made to them an object of excessive dread.

We cannot say whether this law has produced any of the good results hoped for from it; but it is easy to see the crying abuses to which it has given rise. Without speaking of iniquitous law-suits — of the persecutions carried on by the Mandarins against innocent persons, it is certain that this law tends to stifle every sentiment of compassion towards the unfortunate. Who would have the courage to receive into his house any poor suffering wayfarer whose life might be in danger? Who would venture to bestow care upon a dying man, or even to allow him to die in peace in his field, or the ditch that bordered it? Such an act of mercy might chance to be rewarded by total ruin, or even by capital punishment. Thus the sick and unfortunate are driven from every dwelling; they are obliged to remain stretched on the high road, or to be dragged under certain sheds, which, being the property of the government, do not compromise any one. One day we ourselves saw an honest tradesman endeavouring, with tears and

supplications, to persuade a poor fellow who had fainted on the threshold of his shop to go and die somewhere else ; and the unfortunate creature got up with the help of a passer by, and had the charity to go further off and yield his last breath in the middle of the street.

One of the greatest acts of vengeance that a Chinese can practise towards an enemy is to deposit by stealth a dead body upon his ground. He is certain by that means to entail on his foe a long series of miseries and calamities. When we were at our mission in the valley of the Black Waters, one of the little towns in the environs became the scene of a horrible crime of this nature. A vagabond went into the warehouse of a great commercial establishment, and, addressing himself directly to the principal, said, "Steward of the cash-box, I want money and I have none ; I have come to beg you to lend me some ; I know that your Company is rich."

The sinister looks and audacious tone of the fellow intimidated the merchant, and, not daring to turn him out, he offered him two ounces of silver, saying politely it was for a cup of tea. The beggar demanded, with the utmost effrontery, whether he thought a man like him would be satisfied with two ounces of silver. "It is not much," said the merchant, "but times are bad, business is not going on well, and every body is poor now-a-days."

"What, you are poor too, are you?" said the mendicant; "keep your two ounces of silver then ; I'm not going to starve you," and he went out, casting on the merchant a look like that of a wild beast.

The next day he presented himself again in the street before the door, holding a child in his arms, and called out, "Steward of the cash! steward of the cash!"

The merchant recognised the man, and cried, laughing, "Ah, ha, you have thought better of it, and have come to fetch your two ounces of silver, have you?"

"No, I have not," said the ruffian; "on the contrary, I have come to make you a present. See, here is something to make your business get on better;" and with these words he plunged a knife into the heart of the child, flung it all bleeding into the warehouse, and then rushed away and hid himself in the labyrinth of streets. The child belonged to a family known to be at enmity with this one, and the consequence was the total ruin of the house; the principal partners of which long languished in the public prisons.

It is probable that a case so atrocious as this does not often

happen ; but there is no doubt that the law in question quite fails in its object, and, instead of preventing crime, tends to produce it.

The fears entertained by the Mandarins of Kuen-kiang-hien on our account had certainly not been such as to make them dread any of these terrible outrages of the Chinese law ; but they had imagined that the French government would concern itself about our death, and call their Emperor to account for it, and that there would consequently come a long series of inquiries, perplexities, and annoyances of every kind, that the malevolent might accuse them of negligence, and that they might have to suffer loss and damage in various ways. We took good care not to undeceive them, and to tell them that our government had something else to do than to trouble itself about us ; we thought it better to leave them in this salutary fear—salutary not only for us, be it observed, but for any missionaries who might have anything to do with their tribunals. These Mandarins did not know probably that the judicial assassination of several French missionaries had formed no obstacle to the exchange of the most touching assurances of esteem and affection between the two governments, and that neither our sickness nor our death would be likely to occasion them the smallest uneasiness.

After resting four days at Kuen-kiang-hien, our strength being sufficiently restored, we began to think of continuing our journey. When we announced this joyful news to the prefect of the town, although he made the most polite efforts to appear concerned, it was impossible for him to restrain the transports of his delight. His language under its influence became quite poetical and flowery. He wished us—nay, he promised us for every day of our journey till we should reach Macao—a smooth and fine road, calm weather, a sky of cloudless blue, cool and umbrageous places of repose, a favourable wind, and a propitious current on the river ; in short, he forgot nothing that could render our journey happy and agreeable. What a piece of good fortune it was for him that we should have been at Kuen-kiang-hien when we arrived, and just at the time of our illness! We might have met with a careless selfish magistrate, who would not have understood, or not have fulfilled his duty towards us ; a magistrate who would not, as he had done, have given us his whole heart, have surrounded us every day, as he had had the happiness of doing, with solicitude, and affection, and devotion. And, in order to convince us of the sincerity of these charming expressions, he assured us that he had carried his care so far as to choose for us a magnificent coffin, at the first maker's in Kuen-kiang-hien.

Could there possibly be a more polite man? To have a coffin made quite ready for us in case we should want it—we could not fail to thank him with warmth for this most tender and delicate attention.

In no other country than China, perhaps, could men be heard exchanging compliments on the subject of a coffin. People are mostly shy of mentioning the lugubrious objects destined to contain the mortal remains of a relation or friend, and when death does enter the house, the coffin is got in in secrecy and silence, in order to spare the feelings of the mourning family. But it is quite otherwise in China; there a coffin is simply an article of the first necessity to the dead, and of luxury and fancy to the living. In the great towns you see them displayed in the shops, with all sorts of tasteful decorations, painted and varnished, and polished and trimmed up to attract the eyes of passengers and give them the fancy to buy themselves one. People in easy circumstances, who have money to spare for their pleasures, scarcely ever fail to provide themselves beforehand with a coffin to their own taste, and which they consider becoming; and, until the moment arrives for lying down in it, it is kept in the house, not as an article of immediate necessity, but as one that cannot fail to be consoling and pleasant to the eye in a nicely furnished apartment.

For well brought-up children it is a favourite method of expressing the fervour of their filial piety towards the authors of their being, a sweet and tender consolation for the heart of a son to be able to purchase a beautiful coffin for an aged father or mother, and come in state to present the gift at the moment when they least expect such an agreeable surprise. If one is not sufficiently favoured by fortune to be able to afford the purchase of a coffin in advance, care is always taken that before "saluting the world," as the Chinese say, a sick person shall at least have the satisfaction of casting a glance at his last abode; and if he is surrounded by at all affectionate relations, they never fail to buy him a coffin, and place it by the side of his bed.

In the country this is not always so easy; for coffins are not kept quite ready, and, besides, peasants have not such luxurious habits as townspeople. The only way then is to send for the carpenter of the place, who takes measure of the sick person, not forgetting to observe to him that it must be made a little longer than would seem necessary, because one always stretches out a little when one's dead. A bargain is then made concerning the length and the breadth, and especially the cost; wood is brought, and the workmen set about their task in the yard close to the chamber of

the dying person, who is entertained with the music of the saw and the other tools, while death is at work within him, preparing him to occupy the snug abode when it is ready.

All this is done with the most perfect coolness, and without the slightest emotion, real or affected. We have ourselves witnessed such scenes more than once, and it has always been one of the things that most surprised us in the manners of this extraordinary country. A short time after our arrival at the mission in the north, we were walking one day in the country with a Chinese seminarist, who had the patience to reply to all our long and tedious questions about the men and things of the Celestial Empire. Whilst we were keeping up the dialogue as well as we could, in a mixture of Latin and Chinese, using a word of one or the other as we found occasion, we saw coming towards us a rather numerous crowd, who advanced in an orderly manner along a narrow path. It might have been called a procession.

Our first impulse was to turn aside, and get into some safe corner behind a large hill; for, not having as yet much experience in the manners and customs of the Chinese, we had some hesitation in producing ourselves, for fear of being recognised and thrown into prison — possibly even condemned and strangled. Our seminarist, however, reassured us, and declared that we might continue our walk without any fear. The crowd had now come up with us, and we stood aside to let it pass. It was composed of a great number of villagers, who looked at us with smiling faces, and had the appearance of being uncommonly pleased. After them came a litter, on which was borne an empty coffin, and then another litter, upon which lay extended a dying man wrapped in blankets. His face was haggard and livid, and his expiring eyes were fixed upon the coffin that preceded him. When every one had passed, we hastened to ask the meaning of this strange procession. "It is some sick man," said the seminarist, "who has been taken ill in a neighbouring village, and whom they are bringing home to his family. The Chinese do not like to die away from their own house." "That is very natural; but what is the coffin for?" "For the sick man, who probably has not many days to live. They seem to have made everything ready for his funeral. I remarked by the side of the coffin a piece of white linen that they mean to use for the mourning."

These words threw us into the most profound astonishment, and we saw then that we had come into a new world — into the midst of a people whose ideas and feelings differed widely from those of Europeans. These men quietly setting about to prepare for the

funeral of a still living friend and relation ; this coffin placed purposely under the eyes of the dying man, doubtless with the purpose of doing what was agreeable to him ; all this plunged us into a strange reverie, and the walk was continued in silence.

The astonishing calmness with which the Chinese see the approach of death does not fail when the last moment arrives. They expire with the most incomparable tranquillity without any of the emotions, the agitations, the agonies that usually render the moment of death so terrific. Their life goes out gently like a lamp that has no more oil. The most certain sign by which you may know when they have not long to live, is when they no longer ask for their pipe. "The sick man does not smoke any more," the Chinese Christians were accustomed to say, when they came to summon us to administer the last sacraments. This was a formula to indicate that the danger was pressing, and that there was no time to lose.

It appears to us that this peaceable death of the Chinese is to be attributed, first, to their soft and lymphatic temperament, and, secondly, to their entire want of religious feeling. The apprehensions connected with a future life, and the bitterness of separation, cannot exist for those who have never loved any one much, and who have passed their lives without thinking of God or their souls. They die indeed calmly ; but irrational animals have the same advantage, and at bottom this death is really the most lamentable that can be imagined.

We quitted at last this town of Kuen-kiang-hien, where we had been on the point of stopping for ever ; but before we set off we had the curiosity to go and see the coffin that had been prepared for us. It was made out of four enormous trunks of trees, well planed, stained of a violet colour, and beautifully varnished. Master Ting asked us how we liked it. "Superb," we said ; "but yet we must own we prefer being seated in our palanquin."

We resumed our journey, conformably to the new programme, by torch and lantern light.

The doctor had recommended it when he gave us his parting advice : and the night travelling so completely restored our strength and appetite, that the next day, when we entered the Communal Palace of *Tien-men*, we felt quite fresh and well.

CHAP. XII.

Visit of the Mandarins of Tien-men. — Their Attention to us. — Fame of Tien-men for the Number and Beauty of its Water-melons. — Extensive Use of the Water-melon Seed. — Caustic Humour of a young military Mandarin. — The Inhabitants of Sse-tchouen treated as Strangers in the Province of Hou-pé. — Prejudices of Europeans with regard to Chinese. — The Manner in which most Works on China are composed. — True View of the supposed Immobility of the Orientals. — Revolutions in the Chinese Empire. — Socialist School in the Eleventh Century. — Account of their System. — Long and severe Struggle. — Transportation of Tartar Agitators. — Causes of the barbarian Invasions.

The Mandarins of the town of Tien-men made haste to visit us. They knew that a serious illness had detained us four days at Kuen-kiang-hien, and though they had been informed that our health was improving, they desired to convince themselves of it in person. It was easy to see through this great politeness; they feared no doubt that being yet scarcely convalescent, we might take it into our heads to rest awhile in their town. What if a relapse should take place, and we should die at Tien-men! It may be imagined how formidable these ideas were to men who dread expense and trouble above everything. When they saw us, however, their fears were at an end, for we were looking pretty well, and, what mattered more to them, expressed our intention of pursuing our journey at nightfall. Full of hope, they exerted themselves to render our departure easy and agreeable. In order to procure for us invigorating repose, they set a guardian of the Communal Palace to drive out with a horse-hair fly-flapper any musquitoes that might be in our rooms; and, fearing that these impertinent insects, yielding to the depravity of their natures, might return to trouble our slumbers, they fumigated all the approaches with certain aromatic herbs whose odour is said to be unendurable to musquitoes. The desired result was obtained; we slept tranquilly and to our heart's content.

Hearing that we had more than once shown a predilection for aqueous fruits, the authorities of Tien-men had the kindness to put an abundant supply of them at our disposal; water-melons, in particular, were lavished on us with astonishing prodigality. The soldiers, the servants, the palanquin-bearers, all had as much as they could desire. It was the height of the season for this fruit, which is produced at Tien-men of unusual size and superior flavour. Though it was very early when we entered the town

we had remarked in all the streets long stalls covered with a profusion of magnificent slices of water-melons; some were scarlet, some white, and some yellow, the latter being generally the most delicate.

The water-melon is very important in China on account of its seeds, for which the Chinese have a perfect passion. The reader may perhaps remember the old Mandarin of honour, who had been fastened upon us in the capital of Sse-tchouen, and who seemed to have come into the world for no other purpose than to chew melon-seeds. In some places, when the harvest is abundant, the fruit is valueless, and only preserved for the sake of the seed. Sometimes the fruit is carried in quantities to some frequented highway, and given away to travellers, on condition that they shall put aside the seeds for the proprietor. By this interested generosity they have the glory of refreshing the weary during the hot season, and they also relieve themselves of the trouble of working these mines to extract the precious deposit within.

These water-melon seeds are indeed a treasure of cheap amusement for the three hundred million inhabitants of the Celestial Empire. They are an object of daily consumption throughout the eighteen provinces, and it is amusing to see these extraordinary people munching these seeds before their meals to test the condition of their stomach and appetite. Their long and pointed nails are then extremely useful. The skill and rapidity with which they strip off the hard shell to obtain the tiny kernel must be seen to be appreciated; a troop of squirrels or apes could not manœuvre more dexterously. We always thought that the natural propensity of the Chinese for what is artificial and deceptive had inspired them with this frantic passion for water-melon seeds; for if there is in the world a disappointing dish, a fantastic kind of food, it is surely this. Therefore the Chinese use them at all times and in all places. If a few friends assemble to drink tea or rice-wine, there is always an obligato accompaniment of melon-seeds. They are eaten whilst travelling, whilst pursuing business; when children or workmen have a few sapecks to dispose of, they run to expend them on this dainty; it is sold everywhere — in the towns and the villages, on the high-roads and the by-roads; in the wildest and most ill-provisioned district you need never fear to be without melon-seeds. The consumption of them throughout the Empire is something incredible, something beyond the limits of the wildest imagination. You sometimes see junks on the rivers entirely loaded with this precious cargo; truly you might imagine yourself in a nation of *rodentia*. It would be a

curious inquiry, and one worthy to attract the attention of our great compilers of statistical tables, to fix the daily, monthly, or yearly consumption of this article, in a country counting three hundred million inhabitants.

On leaving Tien-men, where we passed a pleasant day, there was appointed to accompany us as escort to the following stage, a young military Mandarin, whose manners and gossip amused us much. His little, pale, lively face, with a touch of sarcasm in it, excited interest and curiosity; although a soldier, he had more brains than most of the men of letters, and no one was more convinced of this than himself. As he spoke not only with ease but with elegance, he was not backward in the use of his tongue; he discussed everything that came into his head with decision and authority, interlarding his long harangues with pleasantries and witticisms not wanting in smartness. Above all, he boasted of a long residence at Canton, and of some small displays of prowess against the English, as well as of having studied the manners and customs of foreign nations, and of being thus fitted to appreciate and judge definitively every subject on the face of the earth.

When we halted for our mid-day meal, he began to tease the Mandarins of our escort most pitilessly. He talked of Sse-tchouen as of a foreign country, a mere savage region. He asked them whether civilisation had begun to creep into the mountains yet. "You are not from the Thibet frontier," said he; "it is easy to perceive in your accent, manners, and appearance, that you live very near a race of savages, and this is certainly the first time you have travelled. Everything surprises you — that is always the way with people who never stir from the place they are born in;" and he went on to point out to them many contrasts between their customs and those of Hou-pé.

To tell the truth, our Sse-tchouenites had found themselves sadly out of their element since they had left their province. They were ignorant of the manners of the country we were traversing; they were laughed at, insulted, and, above all, fleeced.

One day, for example, some soldiers of the escort had seated themselves for a few minutes before a shop. When they rose to depart, a clerk of the establishment came and demanded, with much gravity, two sapecks a piece for having rested before his door. The soldiers looked at him in amazement; but the malicious clerk held out his hand with the air of a man who has no suspicion that his demand can possibly be objected to. The poor travellers, attacked in their tenderest point — the pocket — ventured to say that they did not understand the demand. "That is

very strange!" cried the clerk; and, summoning his neighbours around, "Look here! these men fancy they can sit before my shop for nothing! Where can they come from, I wonder, to be ignorant of the commonest customs!"

The neighbours exclaimed, laughed loudly, and marvelled at people who were simple enough to imagine they could sit down for nothing. The soldiers, ashamed of being taken for uncivilised creatures, paid the two sapecks, saying, to excuse themselves, that such was not the custom in Sse-tchouen. They had not gone far, however, when some officious shop-keepers ran to tell them, as a consolation, that they were very silly to let themselves be taken in so easily.

These scenes were of daily occurrence while we were travelling through Hou-pé, and indeed we natives of the West found ourselves more at home throughout China than the inhabitants of other provinces who were unused to travelling.

Very false ideas are entertained in Europe concerning China and the Chinese. It is spoken of as an empire of remarkable and imposing unity, as a perfectly homogeneous nation, so that to know one Chinese is to know them all; and after passing some time in a Chinese town, you are capable of describing life throughout this vast country. This is far from being the case, though no doubt there are certain characteristics to be found throughout, which constitute the Chinese type.

These characteristics are remarkable in the face, the language, the manners, the ideas, and certain national prejudices; but they are distinguished by such varieties of shade, such well defined differences, that it is easy to tell whether you are dealing with the men of the north, south, east, or west. In passing from one province to another, you become aware of these modifications; the language changes by degrees till it is no longer intelligible; the dress alters in form so much that you can distinguish a citizen of Canton from one of Pekin by it alone. Each province has customs peculiarly its own, even in important matters, in the imposition of taxes, the nature of contracts, and the construction of houses. There exist also particular privileges and laws which the government dare not abolish, and which the functionaries are forced to respect; there reign everywhere rights of established custom which destroy that civil and administrative unity that Europeans have been been pleased to attribute to this colossal empire.

As much difference might be pointed out between the eighteen provinces as between the various states of Europe; a Chinese who passes from one to the other finds himself in a strange

country, amidst a people whose habits are unknown to him, where every one is struck with the peculiarity of his face, language, and manners. There is nothing surprising in this when it is considered that the Chinese empire is composed of a number of kingdoms, often separated under the dominion of various princes, and ruled by distinct legislation. These nations, though more than once united, have never combined so closely but that an observing eye could detect the different elements composing the vast whole.

Hence it follows that a sojourn in Macao or the factories of Canton does not render a man competent to judge of the Chinese nation. Even a missionary, who has resided many years in the bosom of a Christian community, will no doubt be perfectly acquainted with the district that has been the theatre of his zealous labours; but if he undertakes to extend his observations, and believes that the ways of the converts around him are those of the whole empire, he deceives himself, and misleads the public opinion of Europe. It may be imagined, therefore, how difficult it is to form a just estimate of the Chinese character and country from the writings of travellers who have paid a passing visit to those ports open to Europeans. These writers are undoubtedly gifted with intellect and a fertile imagination; they choose their language, and turn their sentences with an enviable skill; when reading their books you never doubt their good faith for a.moment; there is only one thing wanting,—that they should have seen the country and the nation of which they speak.

Let us suppose that a citizen of the Celestial Empire, wishing to become acquainted with that mysterious Europe whose products he has so often admired, makes up his mind to visit the extraordinary people of whom he has no knowledge beyond a vague notion of their geographical position. He embarks; and, after traversing the ocean till he is sick of seeing nothing but sea and sky, he reaches the port of Havre. Unfortunately he does not know a word of French, and is obliged to call to his assistance some porter who has picked up, somehow or other, a little Chinese; he adorns him with the title of interpreter or *toun-sse*, and gets on with him as best he can, eking out his words with abundance of pantomimic gestures.

Furnished with this guide, he traverses the streets of Havre from morning till night, disposed to make an astonishing discovery at every step, in order that he may have the pleasure of regaling his fellow-countrymen with his wonderful adventures on his return home. He enters every shop, is enraptured with all he

sees, and buys the most extraordinary things, paying of course, two or three times what they are worth, because there is an understanding between his interpreter and the shopman to get as much as possible out of the barbarian.

Of course our Chinese is a philosopher and a moralist, and therefore takes a great many notes; he devotes the evening to this important labour, to which he calls in the aid of his guide. He always has a long series of questions ready for him, but is a little embarrassed because he can neither make his own questions quite intelligible, nor understand very clearly the answers returned. Nevertheless, after making the effort of coming to the West, it is absolutely necessary to acquire a mass of information, and enlighten China on the condition of Europe. What would people say if he had nothing to tell them after his long journey? He writes, therefore, sometimes according to the information of a porter whom he does not understand, sometimes at the dictation of his own suggestive imagination.

After a few months passed thus in Havre, our traveller returns to his native country, well disposed to yield to the entreaties of his friends not to deprive the public of the useful and precious information he has collected concerning an unknown country.

No doubt this Chinese will have seen many things he did not expect; and if he be at all well informed, might prepare a very interesting article on Havre for the Pekin Gazette. But if, not content with that, he takes up his too ready pen to compose a dissertation on France, the form of its government, the character of its senate and legislature, its magistracy and army, science, arts, industry and commerce, not to speak of the various kingdoms of Europe, which he will liken to France, we must suspect that his narrative, however picturesque and well written, will contain a mass of errors. His "Travels in Europe," as he will no doubt call his book, cannot fail to convey to his countrymen very false ideas regarding the nations of the West.

Many works on China published in Europe have been written in the manner I have described, and after perusing them it is difficult to imagine China such as she really is. The China described is a work of imagination, a country which has no existence, and setting aside the great mistake regarding the unity of the Chinese Empire, there are many others which we will venture to point out.

The immutability of the Asiatics is one of those established ideas in regard to them which is founded on an utter ignorance of their history. "If there is," says M. Abel Rémusat, "in the whole

range of European ideas, one recognised fact, one notion indisputably settled, it is that of the subjection of Eastern nations to their ancient doctrines, manners, and customs, of the regularity of their habits, and the unchangeable nature of their laws. The immutability of the East has passed into a proverb, and this opinion, among other advantages, possesses that of rendering superfluous all inquiry after their ancient condition, which is supposed to be illustrated so well by their present state. May I venture to brave the general conviction and disturb the tranquillity of public opinion on this topic, by representing the Orientals as people who from time to time have followed new doctrines, adopted various forms of government, and bowed to the sway of fashion in the matter of personal adornments. The Europeans, who are so fond of change in these things, will think that in asserting this I intend to extol the Asiatics, and I fear being taken for an enthusiastic eulogist of these people, because I try to establish a conviction of their inconstancy.

"But, in the first place, what intimate connection is there between those nations called Orientals, that we should class them under one general head, and include them all in one comprehensive estimate? It would appear that somewhere or other there is an immense country called the East, whose inhabitants, formed on the same model, and subject to the same influences, may be described *en masse*, and comprehended in one view. Yet what have these nations in common beyond their Asiatic birth? And what is Asia but a portion of the great continent which the sea only surrounds on three sides, and to which we have assigned fictitious limits, and traced an imaginary boundary on the side nearest us? Even those ancient names that were formerly in use are becoming superseded by more elegant appellations, and it is hard to say exactly what is Asia, since our geographers have proscribed the whole four quarters of the world, and substituted a division of three, five, or six with the harmonious names of Australia, Polynesia, Oceanica, and Nothasia.* Are the Malays an Asiatic race? Are the Muscovites a European nation? Are there many points of resemblance between an Armenian and a Tartar, an Indian and a Japanese? There is more difference between them than between a Londoner and a Parisian, a citizen of Madrid or of St. Petersburg. Yet we class them all together, because we do not know how to distinguish

* A name sometimes applied by French geographers to a portion of the Indian archipelago, including the isles of Sunda, Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas, and Philippines.—TRANS.

them, just as we are embarrassed to detect a difference of features in those negro faces which on casual observation appear identical. We confound intellectual traits and moral developments, and from this confusion produce an imaginary being, resembling nothing that really exists; we call it an Asiatic or Oriental, and, knowing no more about it, praise or blame at random; generic terms are indeed useful to people who are not particular about having correct ideas, and who care little to understand before pronouncing judgment.

"But if you would consider this subject more nearly, you will be surprised at the multitude of things unknown to you, at the prodigious differences to be traced between nations which we class together so carelessly, or, to speak more plainly, which we confound so ignorantly. I do not mean varieties of climate, nor of dress, which necessarily follow those variations, nor of race as exhibited in the countenance, although that is great enough to cause one people to treat as a monster what is elsewhere prodigiously admired. Nor do I point to natural productions, which influence social habits so largely, nor to language, though it acts powerfully on literary taste; I confine myself especially to two points, religion and laws, two points of the highest importance, revolutions in which produce such great changes in public and private life, and which do not in Asia present the painful monotony that has been fancied; for, in spite of what a great writer has said, these two points do not depend entirely on climate, or, in other words, religion and law are not settled by rain and sunshine."*

After passing briefly in review the principal Asiatic nations, and showing that they have little or nothing in common, that each has a separate moral, political, and religious character, this learned and discerning writer continues thus: "All these races may be called Easterns, for the sun certainly lights them before us; or Asiatics, for they live east of the Oural mountains, which in modern maps are considered the line of demarcation between Europe and Asia, but it must be understood that the name is all they have in common, and that it is used for brevity's sake to avoid long and useless denominations, being only incorrect when used carelessly and unthinkingly. The characteristics which are common to these nations are their obstinacy in what concerns themselves, and their prejudice against foreigners. But these blind prejudices and this dogged obstinacy separate them one from another as much as from us, and a Japanese at Teheran, or an

* Mélanges Asiatiques, p. 224.

Egyptian in the streets of Nankin, would be an object of almost as much astonishment and ridicule as a European.

"But in recalling the annals of the past, shall we perhaps discover something of that uniform civilisation, that one primitive type, whose chief attribute is held to be immutability? Different as they now are, may the Easterns only have become so in the course of time? Did they indeed resemble one another at a far distant epoch? Have they become changeable in consequence of change, and has one revolution given them a taste for others? The history of Asia answers all these questions, and if a false solution of them is offered to the public, the reason is that it costs some trouble to study the history itself, and that the greater part of those who speak of it find it easier to create fiction than to search for truth.

"Religion and government are among the things which should only be changed on necessity, and men who allow themselves to be lightly influenced on other subjects might adhere firmly to their opinion on these. But men are men in Asia as elsewhere, and inconstancy in serious matters has ever been a malady of the human race. We therefore find in the annals of that part of the world such abundant material for the history of folly and error, that we must be rich indeed in such experience on our own account to be able to neglect so many useful lessons, which would not cost us a tear or a penny.

"Asia is the domain of fable, of aimless reveries and fantastic imagery; what astonishing varieties, and, we may say, what deplorable diversity may be there observed of the manner in which human reason, without any other guide, has endeavoured to satisfy the first want of society—religion.

"If there are few truths that have not been taught in Asia, it may also be said that there are few extravagances that have not been held in honour there. The mere list of the various faiths that have in turn prevailed in the East saddens good sense and alarms the imagination. The idolatry of the Sabæans, the worship of fire and the elements, Islamism, the polytheism of the Brahmins, that of the Buddhists and followers of the Grand Lama, the worship of the heavenly bodies, and ancestors, of spirits and demons, and many minor sects of which little is known, all vying with each other in senseless dogmas and strange customs, do not these present variety enough on a most important point? And how can morals, laws, and customs be unchangeable, when the very basis of all law and morality vacillates thus?

"Nor is it a single nation in Asia that has been subject to

these fluctuations; all the nations, all the races, have brought their contribution to swell the general mass of follies very like our own; and to see the eagerness with which they are adopted in nations which have not given them birth, one would say that, contrary to ordinary opinion, the desire for change among these men overcomes even the force of custom and national prejudice, in so much that a new system is always welcome, if it be but in opposition to common sense; for reasonable ideas have less lively charms and less rapid success, they attract at first only intelligent minds, and it is often but slowly that they gain ground with the multitude."

The Chinese, with whom we ought here particularly to occupy ourselves, have not been the less remarkable among Asiatic races for their inconstancy in religion. In the ages of antiquity, China preserved herself from one evil by the aid of another; she avoided idolatry by lapsing into indifference; already during the lifetime of Confucius, however, China was divided by two principal religious sects, and five or six systems of philosophy, all teaching contradictory doctrines. A third faith, that of Buddhism, has since been added to the two first, and the three have held possession of an empire which counts one-third of the human race. Long and tragic are the accounts of the divisions and quarrels which, at various epochs of Chinese history, these religious questions have given rise to; but it is to be remarked that whilst the cultivated classes have been always attached to the principles of Confucius, the multitude have inclined to the superstitious practices of Buddhism. But it would be difficult to find, elsewhere than in China, people who could adopt all these various faiths and philosophic systems, without troubling themselves to reconcile them one with the other. This was the commencement of that relapse into religious indifference, in which the Chinese are now plunged, after so long suffering themselves to be blown about by every wind of doctrine.

Nor have governments and institutions varied less than religion throughout Asia. Here again is the fancied constancy wanting. Religion and polities are everywhere connected, and as we retrace our steps to the infancy of society, they appear to be blended together. In the Eastern regions of Asia they were formerly one and the same thing, if we may judge from tradition; and the government of forty centuries ago did not in the least resemble those of the present day. The name of *heaven* was given to the Empire, the sovereign called himself *God*, and confided to his several ministers the business of lighting, warming, and fertilising the

universe. The titles of these ministers, and the dresses they wore, corresponded to their noble functions ; there was one to represent the sun, one for the moon, and so on for the other planets; there was a superintendent of mountains, another of rivers, of air, forests, &c. A supernatural authority was attributed to these functionaries, and the harmony of this fine order of things was only disturbed by comets and eclipses, which were supposed to announce to the world a deviation of the heavenly bodies from their accustomed path, and whose apparition, even at the present day in China, is a rude shock to the popularity of a statesman. A very similar system appears to have reigned in Persia in remote antiquity, but in both countries terrestrial events rudely dissipated these brilliant fictions. War, rebellion, conquest, and division led to the establishment of the feudal system, which lasted about seven or eight centuries, nearly the period during which it held sway in Europe, and which was more than once reproduced by the effect of the same causes which first gave it birth. Monarchy, nevertheless, prevailed generally, and ended by obtaining a complete and decisive triumph ; so that China really experienced what would have been seen in Europe had the dreams of those who aspired to universal empire been realised, and France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the States of the North been united in one vast kingdom, ruled by one sovereign, and having the same institutions.

The counterpoise to the Imperial power (at first a very weak one) was the philosophy of Confucius. It acquired more strength in the seventh century, became regularly organised, and it is now 1,200 years since the system of competition and examinations for literary degrees, the aim of which is to subject the unlearned to the yoke of the learned, has practically placed the government in the hands of educated men.

The irruptions of Tartars, a race who trouble themselves very little about literature, have sometimes suspended the rule of this philosophical oligarchy, but sooner or later it has always resumed its sway, for the Chinese appear to prefer the dominion of the pen to that of the sword, and pedantry to violence, though the one does not always banish the other. Those learned men who have made such erudite researches to prove how the Chinese government has been enabled to remain unchanged for 4,000 years, have neglected one thing which is rather important. No doubt the reasons alleged are very learned and well imagined, but the fact to be accounted for is simply not true, a misfortune which has happened before now to philosophical explanations. The Chinese

have adopted various maxims, altered their form of government, tried divers political combinations, and, though there are some experiments of which they have not bethought themselves, their history presents nearly the same phases as that of most other nations.

China has certainly no need to envy other countries their changes; but she might excite jealousy in some on the score of her revolutions, the tragic overthrow of dynasties, and civil wars.

What would our most famous European revolutionists say, if they were told that they are but children and scholars beside the Chinese in the art of upsetting society? Yet this is true; their history is one series of catastrophes which have at various times shaken the empire to its foundation.

Compare France and China within a given period of time, say from the year 420—the entrance of the Franks into Gaul—to the year 1644, when Louis XIV. ascended the throne of France, and when the Mantchou Tartars established themselves in Pekin. During the time of 1224 years, these so-called peaceful Chinese, this nation so attached to ancient laws and customs, so renowned for its immobility, went through fifteen changes of dynasty, all accompanied by frightful civil wars, and almost all by the bloody extermination of the dethroned families. In the same space of time France only saw two changes of dynasty, which were quietly effected by time and circumstances, without any effusion of blood.

It is true that since then we have made great progress, and that since we have made acquaintance with the Chinese, we have done our best to emulate them. If we could imagine that the history of China was at all studied amongst us, we might fancy that our fellow-countrymen had resolved to copy them; they have done it already to admiration on several points; a feverish taste for political change, and a profound indifference on religious topics, are two leading traits of Chinese character. It is a curious fact that the greater part of those social theories which have lately thrown the public mind of France into a ferment, and which are represented as the sublime results of the progress of human reason, are but exploded Chinese Utopias which agitated the Celestial Empire centuries ago. Our readers may judge of this from the extracts we shall make from the History of China, but which we must condense, on account of their lengthy details.

In the 11th century of our era, the Chinese nation, under the dynasty of Song, presented a spectacle nearly analogous to that seen in Europe, and France especially, of late years. The great and knotty questions of social and political economy filled all

minds, and split into parties every class of society. Those people who at other times have seemed so indifferent to the proceedings of their government, then flung themselves passionately into the discussion of systems which aimed at an immense social revolution. Matters had come to such a point, that the ordinary business of life was neglected; commerce, handicrafts, and even agriculture, were abandoned for polemical agitation. The nation was divided into two furious parties; pamphlets, libels, inflammatory writings of all kinds were daily flung profusely to the multitude, who devoured them with avidity. Placards also played a prominent part, and though not long since we manifested a certain aptitude for this mode of influence, it must be confessed we are far behind the Chinese.

The reformer, or chief of the Socialist party, was the famous Wang-ngan-ché, a man of remarkable talent, who kept all classes of the Empire in excitement during the reign of several emperors. Chinese historians say that he had received from nature a mind far above mediocrity, which was brought to perfection by careful culture. In youth he studied with ardour and application, and his efforts were crowned with success; he was distinguished by honourable mention among those who received the rank of doctor at the same time. He spoke with eloquence and grace, having the art of giving weight to all he said, and he knew how to give an air of importance to trifling things when his interest required it. His private life was regular, and all his external conduct respectable; such were his good qualities. On the other hand, he is represented as ambitious, and as a man who thought any means lawful to gain his ends, self-willed to obstinacy when he had to support an opinion he had once advanced; haughty, and filled with an idea of his own merits, esteeming only what agreed with his own opinions and views of politics, and desirous of uprooting and utterly destroying the old institutions of his country, to replace them with new ones of his own invention.

To accomplish his enterprise he did not hesitate to undertake a long, difficult, and even repulsive task. This was to make ample commentaries on all the sacred and classical writings, into which he insinuated his own opinions; and to compose a universal dictionary, in which he gave to certain words an arbitrary meaning according to his own interest. Historians add that he was incompetent to conduct affairs of state, because he had only general views on the subject, and would have governed according to maxims which, though good in themselves, he did not apply to the right time and circumstance.

The popularity of Wang-ngan-ché fluctuated greatly at various periods during the time that he bent all his efforts to reorganise, or rather to revolutionise, the Empire. His power was almost unlimited beneath the Emperor Chen-tsoung, who, charmed with the brilliant qualities of the reformer, gave him his entire confidence.

The executive and the tribunals were soon filled with his creatures, and seizing the favourable moment to realise his schemes, the ancient order of things was soon overthrown. His innovations and reforms were greeted enthusiastically by his partisans, and attacked with envenomed eagerness by his enemies.

The most formidable adversary encountered by Wang-ngan-ché was a statesman named Sse-ma-kouang, one of the most celebrated historians of China, the same who described his garden so charmingly in the little poem we have already quoted.

M. Abel Remusat has written a biographical notice of him, in which occurs the following account of Wang-ngan-ché and his opponents.*

"The Emperor Chen-tsoung, on ascending the throne, desired to surround himself with all the enlightened men of the country, amongst whom Sse-ma-kouang could not be overlooked. This new phase of his political life was no less stormy than the previous one. Placed in opposition to one of those audacious spirits who, in the path to their plans of reform, fear no obstacle, and respect no ancient institution, Sse-ma-kouang showed himself, what he had ever been, a religious observer of the customs of antiquity, and ready to brave all for their maintenance.

"Wang-ngan-ché was the reformer whom chance had opposed to Sse-ma-kouang, as if to summon to an equal combat the guardian genius that watches over the preservation of empires, and the spirit of reform that makes them tremble. Stimulated by contrary principles, the adversaries were gifted with equal talents: one employed the resources of his imagination, the activity of his mind, and the firmness of his character, to change and to regenerate; the other, to stem this torrent, called to his aid the remembrance of the past, the example of the ancients, and the lessons of history, which he had studied with care.

"Even the prejudices of the nation to which Wang-ngan-ché was proud to show himself superior, found a supporter in his antagonist. In the year 1069 several provinces had been visited in succession by a number of terrible disasters; epidemic maladies,

* Nouveaux Mélanges Asiatiques.

earthquakes, and a drought which destroyed nearly all the harvest. According to custom, the censors seized the occasion to invite the Emperor to examine if there were faults in his conduct to amend, or abuses in his government to reform; and the Emperor testified his sorrow by abstaining from certain pleasures, music and fêtes in the palace. The reforming minister disapproved of this homage to old prejudice. 'These calamities,' said he to the Emperor, 'have settled and unvarying causes; earthquakes, droughts and inundations have no connection with the actions of man. Do you hope to change the ordinary course of things, and that Nature should alter her laws for you?'"

Sse-ma-kouang, who was present, did not suffer this speech to pass uncombated. "Monarchs are indeed to be pitied," cried he, "when they have near their persons men who propound such theories; they would destroy the fear of heaven, and what other restraint can check their disorders? Masters of all around, they dare anything with impunity, and would give themselves up to any excess; and those subjects who are really attached to them would no longer be able to excite their better feelings."

According to Wang-ngan-ché, the carrying out of his scheme was to procure infallible happiness to the people in the development of the greatest possible material enjoyments for every one. Whilst reading the history of this famous epoch in the dynasty of Song, one is forcibly struck with the resemblance of the writings and harangues of Wang-ngan-ché to those, which, in our own time, we have seen propounded in the newspapers and the senate.

"The first and most essential duty of a government," said the Chinese socialist, "is to love the people, and to procure them the real advantages of life, which are plenty and pleasure. To accomplish this object it would suffice to inspire every one with the unvarying principles of rectitude, but as all might not observe them, the State should explain the manner of following these precepts, and enforce obedience by wise and inflexible laws. In order to prevent the oppression of man by man, the State should take possession of all the resources of the Empire, and become the sole master and employer. The State should take the entire management of commerce, industry, and agriculture into its own hands, with the view of succouring the working classes and preventing their being ground to the dust by the rich." According to these new regulations, tribunals were to be established throughout the Empire, which were to fix the price of provisions and merchandise. For a certain number of years taxes were

to be imposed — to be paid by the rich — from which the poor should be exempt. The tribunals were to decide who was rich and who poor. The sum thus collected was to be reserved in the coffers of the State, to be distributed to aged paupers, to workmen out of employ, and to whoever should be judged to stand most in need of it.

According to Wang-ngan-ché the State was to become the only proprietor of the soil; in each district the tribunals were to assign the land annually to the farmers, and distribute amongst them the seed necessary to sow it, on condition that the loan was repaid either in grain or other provisions after the harvest was gathered; and in order that all the land should be profitably cultivated, the officers of the tribunals should fix what kind of crop was to be grown, and supply the seed for it.

"It is evident," said the partisans of the new scheme, "that by these means abundance and happiness will reign throughout the land. The only people who can suffer by this state of things are the usurers and monopolists, who never fail to profit by famine and all public calamities, to enrich themselves and ruin the working classes. But what great harm will it be to put an end at last to the exactions of these enemies of the people? Does not justice require that they should be forced to restitute their ill-gotten gains? The State will be the only creditor, and will never take interest. As she will watch over agriculture and fix the current price of provisions, there will always be a supply proportionate to the harvest. In case of famine in any one spot, the great agricultural tribunal of Pekin, informed by the provincial tribunals of the various harvests of the Empire, will easily restore the equilibrium by causing the superfluity of the fertile provinces to be transported into those which are a prey to want. Thus the necessaries of life will always be sold at a moderate price, there will no longer be any classes in want, and the State, being the only speculator, will realise enormous profits annually, to be applied to works of public utility."

This radical reform entailed of course the destruction of large fortunes and the reduction of all classes to a more uniform condition, and this was precisely the aim of Wang-ngan-ché and his followers. This bold scheme did not, as with us, stop short at theory, for the Chinese are much more daring than they are reputed to be. The Emperor Chen-tsoung, persuaded by the arguments of Wang-ngan-ché, placed entire authority in his hands, and the social revolution began. Sse-ma-kouang, who had struggled long and fruitlessly against the reformer, determined to

make a last effort, and addressed to the Emperor a remarkable petition, from which we shall quote the passage relative to the advancing of seed-corn to the tiller of the land.

"It is proposed to advance to the people the seed with which they are to sow the ground. At the end of winter, or in the beginning of spring, the officers will supply each man with the quantity they judge necessary, gratuitously. Immediately after the gathering of harvest, the same quantity and no more will be demanded back. What can be more advantageous to the people? By this means all lands will be cultivated, and abundance will reign throughout the provinces of the Empire.

"In theory nothing can be more attractive and beneficial, in practice nothing more injurious to the country. We will suppose the grain distributed, and eagerly received by the people (though on this point I have much doubt); do they really make the use of it for which it is destined? Whoever believes this must have very little experience, and judges far too favourably of the common order of men. The interest of the moment is what concerns them most; the greater part never look beyond the day, and very few indeed trouble their heads about the future.

"The seed, then, is entrusted to them, and they begin by consuming part, they sell or exchange it for something which they imagine they need more than anything else. Corn has been given them; they leave off working, and become idle. But supposing all this does not happen: the grain is sown, all the necessary labours of cultivation are properly performed, the time of gathering the crop arrives, and they are called upon to repay what was lent them. The harvest which they have watched as it grew and ripened, and regarded as their own property, the well-earned fruit of their labours, must now be divided. Part must be yielded up, or sometimes, in bad seasons, the whole crop. How many reasons will be alleged for refusing to do so! How many real and imaginary necessities will stand in the way of the restitution!

"The tribunals, we shall be answered, which are established expressly for this department, will despatch their satellites to enforce the payment of what is due. Doubtless; and beneath the pretext of demanding what is due, what extortion, what robbery and violence will be committed! I do not mention the enormous cost which such establishments would entail; but, after all, at whose expense would they be maintained? At the expense of the Government, the nation, or the farmers? Whichever it may be, who will derive advantage from it? It may be alleged that this practice of advancing the seed has long been in use in the province

of Chen-si, and that none of these evil results have taken place; it appears, on the contrary, that the people find it desirable, since they have made no request for its appeal. I have but one reply to make to this. I am a native of Chen-si; I passed the first part of my life there; I have been an eye-witness to the miseries of the people, and I can affirm that, of the evils under which they suffer, they attribute two-thirds to this practice, against which they murmur unceasingly. Let candid inquiry be entered into, and the true state of things will be made manifest." *

The chronicles of the time add that on the side of Sse-ma-kouang were seen all the most distinguished men of the Empire, whether renowned for wit, experience, talents, judgment, or rank, and who all added their prayers and entreaties to his; then, changing their tone, they accused Wang-ngan-ché of disturbing the public tranquillity.

But amid the violent attacks and clamour that rose against him on all sides, there former remained ever calm and imperturbable. Possessed of the confidence of the sovereign, he smiled at the vain efforts of his enemies to ruin him. He read the declamations and satires which they presented to the Emperor under the name of respectful representations, humble supplications, and so forth, and appeared not to be moved by them in the slightest degree.

When the Emperor, persuaded by the arguments of his adversaries, was on the point of yielding and restoring the form of government to the old footing, Wang-ngan-ché would calmly say to him, "Why should you be hasty in this matter? Wait till experience has shown you the result of the measures which we have adopted for the benefit of your realm and the happiness of your subjects. Beginnings are always difficult, and it is only after overcoming many obstacles that a man can hope to reap the fruit of his labour. Be firm, and all will go well. Ministers, nobles, and Mandarins have all risen against me. I am not surprised at it; they cannot quit the common routine, and adopt new customs. Little by little, they will grow used to these innovations, their natural aversion will die away of its own accord, and they will end by applauding what they are now so eager to decry."

Wang-ngan-ché maintained his ascendency throughout the reign of Chen-tsoung; he put all his plans in execution, and overturned the country at his ease. According to Chinese historians, his social revolution was not successful; the nation became more deeply plunged in misery than ever. But that which excited the public

* Mémoires sur la Chine, vol. x. p. 48.

opinion most deeply against this bold reformer was his attempt to remodel literature, and subject it to his despotic system. Not only did he change the form of examination for the grades of literary rank, but he caused his own commentaries on the sacred books to be adopted as the correct explanation, and ordered that the signification of the characters should be referred to the great dictionary which he had himself composed. This last innovation it was, probably, which drew upon him the implacable hatred of the greater number of his enemies.

On the death of the Emperor, Wang-ngan-ché was immediately deposed; the reigning Empress sent for Sse-ma-kouang, who had been living in retirement. She named him governor of the young Emperor, and Prime Minister. His first step in this important post was to efface every trace of the government of Wang-ngan-ché, who died not long after; nor did Sse-ma-kouang long survive him. The memory of these two men has been by turns execrated with all the virulence of political passion; and in this, again, the Chinese have shown a strong resemblance to the Europeans.

The reigning Empress caused the body of Sse-ma-kouang to be interred with great magnificence, and the official epitaph adorns his memory with all the virtues of a wise man, an excellent citizen, and an accomplished minister; but his highest praise was the public grief at his death. The shops were closed; the people went into mourning; and the women and children who could not kneel beside his coffin, prostrated themselves before his portrait in the interior of their houses. These signs of sorrow accompanied the funeral wherever it appeared, on its way to the native place of Sse-ma-kouang.

Whilst witnessing the honours paid to the memory of this great man, it would not have been easy to foresee the reverse it was destined to experience eleven years later. The partisans of Wang-ngan-ché having contrived to return to the posts from which Sse-ma-kouang had displaced them, found means to cajole the young Emperor, who was now of age and sole master. Sse-ma-kouang was stripped of all his posthumous titles, and declared the enemy of his country,—a measure which made a great impression on the minds of the Chinese. His tomb was destroyed, and the marble monument bearing his epitaph flung to the ground. Another was erected, bearing the enumeration of his pretended crimes; his writings were burnt; and, had it depended on these enraged persecutors, one of the finest specimens of Chinese literature would have been entirely destroyed. In the meantime, the memory of Wang-ngan-ché was restored to honour, and his political system

pursued with redoubled ardour. In reading the history of these sudden changes of public opinion, we might well imagine it was written of some European nation.

Three years had scarcely elapsed before the memory of Sse-ma-kouang was once more adorned with all his titles and honours; and the name of the reformer, again loaded with execration. The socialist party were persecuted in their turn, and forced to fly the country: this was in the year 1129.

While China thus cast forth these bold innovators, the terrible Tchinggis Khan was rising into power in those steppes of Tartary which were soon to pour forth as conquerors their numberless hordes of barbarians. This coincidence is worthy of note, and seems to us to bear out a profound observation of a statesman gifted both with a great intellect and a noble heart.

Shortly before beginning this work on China, we were honoured by an interview with one of those rare men who, amidst all our civil discord, have preserved the esteem and consideration of all parties. We were speaking of those civilised races of ancient Asia whose history is so little known in Europe, and which have no doubt experienced, like ourselves, great social crises, and suffered from mighty revolutions. "I have often thought," said the illustrious speaker, "that the invasions of barbarians, which at various times have overwhelmed Europe, may probably have resulted from some great social movement in the populous countries of Asia. These great centres of civilisation have no doubt been the theatre of terrible struggles, and the ferocious bands whose irruptions are recorded in our history might be those enemies of public peace whom society had forcibly expelled. This is only an *à priori* idea, which stands in need of historical proof; you might perhaps find it in the chronicles of the Chinese Empire."

This remark, proffered with the reserve which distinguishes superior minds, made an impression upon us. We were struck by the connection which we there perceived between the Chinese crisis under the dynasty of Song, and the formidable agitation manifested soon afterwards in Tartary. Since then we have more carefully studied the remarkable events which took place in high Asia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of our era, and the *à priori* idea of the Minister for Foreign Affairs has become for us an historical fact.*

After the final defeat and annihilation of Wang-ngan-ché's

* We hope that M. Drouyn de Lhuys will pardon our having borrowed his idea to place it on these pages in such unworthy company.

system, his numerous partisans were forced to quit the country which they had hoped to make their prey, and where their attempts at disorganisation were remembered with detestation by all good citizens. They passed the Great Wall in large troops, and wandered into the deserts of Tartary. Here, leading a vagabond life, they soon communicated their unquiet spirit and love of change to the Mongol tribes, then remarkable for a fierce and savage disposition. These ferocious Nomads, who had not yet been humanised by Buddhism, were then so far from regarding the slaughter of an animal or the crushing of an insect as a crime, that rapine, plunder, and assassination were their pastimes. It may readily be imagined what a monstrous combination was produced by the union of these people with the refuse of Chinese civilisation! The whole of Tartary was soon in a ferment; and these vigorous nations, inoculated with the passion of revolution, could no longer be restrained within their own boundaries; they sought for other countries to overturn, and inundate with blood, — a world to ravage. Nothing was wanted but a man to organise and command, and Tchinggis Khan appeared. He gathered together the wild and terrible hordes of those regions, and led them in immense battalions even into Europe, crushing and overwhelming all that came in his way. The result of these tremendous invasions is well known.

CHAP. XIII.

Arrival at Han-tchouan. — Custom of presenting a pair of Boots to a disgraced Mandarin. — Placards and Advertisements. — Privileges and Liberty enjoyed by the Chinese. — Association against Gamblers. — Society of the Old Bull. — Liberty of the Press. — Public Lectures. — European Prejudice concerning the Despotism of Asiatic Governments. — Carelessness of Magistrates. — Remembrance of the Sufferings of the venerable Perboyre. — Navigation of a Lake. — Floating Islands. — Population of China. — Its Causes and Dangers. — Cormorant Fishing. — Some Details of Chinese Manners. — Bad Reception at Han-yang. — We follow a wrong Course. — Passage of the Yang-tse-kiang. — Arrival at Ou-tchang-fou.

The sarcasms and pleasantries of the young military Mandarin of Hou-pé were received with a bad grace by our escort, Master Ting especially; but convinced at last, by many mishaps, that they were indeed in a strange country, they took them more in good part, which immediately had the effect of quieting the malice of their witty companion.

After several stages, in which there occurred nothing worthy of mention, we arrived at *Han-tchouan*, a town of the second class. The sun had just risen, a number of idlers were standing about outside the ramparts, and near the principal gate the groups were more numerous. We had the fatuity to imagine that they were assembled to see us pass, but we were never more mistaken.

At the moment when we were about to enter the city, there appeared, coming out, a brilliant procession, followed by an immense crowd, and we were obliged to stop to let it pass. The principal person of the procession was a military Mandarin of advanced age, and who bore the insignia of the *tou-sse*, an important grade in the Chinese army. He rode a richly caparisoned horse, and was surrounded by officers of inferior rank. Directly the procession had passed the gate it stopped, close to where our palanquins were placed, and the crowd pressed forward eagerly, making the air resound with cheers.

Two noble old men, magnificently dressed, and carrying each a satin boot, approached the tou-sse; they knelt down, respectfully pulled off his boots, and replaced them with those they carried. During this ceremony the people all prostrated themselves; two young men then took the boots which had been drawn off, and hung them on the arch of the town gate; and the procession moved on, followed by a large crowd, uttering cries of grief and lamentations. Our palanquins were also set in motion, and we entered Han-tchouan.

The streets were thronged with people, but so much preoccupied were they by the ceremony which had just taken place, that they hardly deigned to cast a glance on the two Devils of the West. When we reached the Communal Palace, we hastened to inquire of the guardian the meaning of what we had seen. We learned that the military Mandarin had been stript of his appointment in consequence of calumnious reports spread against him at Pekin; that he had been degraded a step in military rank, and sent to a less important post. The people, nevertheless, who had had no fault to find with his government of Han-tchouan, had resolved to protest against this injustice by a solemn manifestation. According to custom the *Boots of Honour* were presented to him, as a mark of sympathy, and those which he had worn were retained to hang over the town gate as a precious *souvenir* of his good administration.

This singular custom is of most ancient date and universal practice; it is the means which the Chinese adopt to protest against the injustice of Government and testify their gratitude

to the Mandarin who has really shown himself "The Father and Mother of the People." In almost every town of China, the principal gate is ornamented with a large assortment of old boots, dusty, and tumbling to pieces with rottenness and age. They are the glory of the town—one of its most precious monuments, for they point out how many good Mandarins the country has been fortunate enough to possess.

The first time that we remarked this singular appendage to the gate of a town, we taxed our powers of imagination in vain to guess what they could possibly do there, since it was evidently much too high to be a cobbler's stall. A Christian who accompanied us gave us the real explanation, but we scarcely believed it, nor was it till we had seen many town gates thus adorned that we were convinced they had not been practising on our credulity.

The Chinese, submissive as they are to authority, always find means of expressing their opinion, and of bestowing praise or blame on their Mandarins. The offering of a pair of boots is certainly a very original way of showing esteem and sympathy; but they do not confine themselves to this. A very powerful organ of public opinion is the placard, and this is everywhere made use of with the dexterity of long practice. When it is desired to criticise a Government, to call a Mandarin to order, and show him that the people are discontented with him, the placards are lively, satirical, cutting, and full of sharp and witty sallies; the Roman pasquinade was not to be compared to them. They are posted in all the streets, and especially on the doors of the tribunal where the Mandarin lives who is to be held up to public malediction. Crowds assemble round them, they are read aloud in a declamatory tone, whilst a thousand comments, more pitiless and severe than the text, are poured forth on all sides, amid shouts of laughter.

Sometimes, instead of the vehicle of opposition, it becomes a sort of national reward to those Mandarins who have made themselves popular. Then satire is replaced by pompous eulogy, and the idol of the people is likened to all the most famous holy personages of antiquity. The Chinese, however, succeed much better in blame than praise, and their placards are much happier in insult than in eulogy.

The Chinese are not in the habit of bowing beneath the rod of their master so unresistingly as is imagined. It may indeed be said, and it is to their credit, that they are in general submissive to authority; but when it becomes too tyrannical, or merely fraudu-

lent, they sometimes rise up with irresistible energy, and bend it to their will.

While traversing one of the western provinces, we one day reached a town of the third class, named *Ping-fang*, where we found the whole population in commotion, and wearing a very unaccustomed aspect. We learned that the cause was as follows:—

A Mandarin had been named governor of the town of whom the inhabitants did not approve. It was known that in the district he had just left, his administration had been arbitrary and tyrannical, and that the people had suffered much from his injustice and extortion.

The news of his nomination to Ping-fang therefore excited general indignation, which showed itself at first in the most violent satirical placards. A deputation of the chief citizens set off for the capital of the province, to present to the viceroy a humble petition to have pity on the poor people of Ping-fang, and not to send them a tiger, who would eat them up, instead of a father and mother to take care of them. The petition was refused, and the Mandarin ordered to set off to take possession of his post on the following day.

The deputies returned, bringing this sad news to their fellow citizens. The town was plunged into consternation, but did not confine itself to idle lamentations. The principal people assembled, and held a grand council, to which all the most influential citizens were invited. It was decided that the new governor should not be permitted to install himself, and that he should be civilly ejected from the town.

The Mandarin arrived at the expected time, accompanied by a numerous suite, and, contrary to expectation, he encountered not the smallest sign of opposition on his way. Every one knelt at his approach, and paid homage to his dignity. He was convinced, therefore, that his fears of a bad reception were chimerical, and that all would go well.

Scarcely had he entered the tribunal, however, before he had had time even to drink a cup of tea, it was announced to him that the chief citizens of the town requested an audience. He hastened to grant it, under the impression that they came to offer their congratulations on his safe arrival. The deputation prostrated themselves, according to the rites, before their new Prefect; then, one of them stepping forward, announced to him, with exquisite politeness and infinite grace, that they came in the name of the town, to request that he would set off directly to return whence he came, for they would have none of him.

The Prefect, thus rudely disenchanted, endeavoured first to soothe, and then to intimidate, the rebellious citizens, but all in vain ; he found himself, as the Chinese say, "*only a paper tiger.*" The spokesman very calmly told him that they had not come there to discuss the matter ; that the thing was settled, and they had made up their minds that he should not sleep in the town. In order to leave him in no doubt as to their real intentions, he added that a palanquin waited before the door, and that the town would pay his travelling expenses, besides providing a brilliant escort to conduct him safely to the capital of the province.

It would have been impossible to turn any one out more politely. The Prefect still endeavoured to raise objections ; but a great crowd had gathered round the house, uttering cries of a far from flattering or reassuring nature, and he saw that it would be imprudent further to resist. He yielded, therefore, to his destiny, and signified his willingness to comply with their demands. With much respect and ceremony he was shown to the door, where a handsome palanquin was in waiting, and requested to step in. The cavalcade immediately set off, still accompanied by the chief men of the town.

On reaching their destination, they went straight to the Viceroy's palace. The chief representative of Ping-fang presented the Prefect to the Viceroy, saying :—

"The citizens of Ping-fang restore to you this magistrate, and humbly supplicate you to send them another ; as for this one, they will not have him at any price. Behold the humble petition of your children." Speaking thus, he handed to the Viceroy a long roll of red paper, containing a petition signed with the names of all the most important people of Ping-fang.

The Viceroy, with some appearance of dissatisfaction, took the roll, read it attentively, and then told the deputies that their arguments were advanced on reasonable grounds, and should be attended to ; that they might return home quietly, and announce to their fellow citizens that they should soon have a Prefect to suit them.

When we reached Ping-fang the deputies had just returned, bearing intelligence of the perfect success of their bold measure.

Such incidents are not unfrequent in the Chinese Empire. It often happens that energetic and persevering popular demonstrations oppose the evil administration of the Mandarins, and force the Government to yield to public opinion.

It is a great mistake to fancy the Chinese hemmed in by arbitrary laws, and quailing under a despotic power, which rules

their actions and dictates all their proceedings. Though an absolute monarchy, moderated, indeed, by the influence of the educated classes, the people enjoy beneath it much more liberty than is generally supposed, and possess many privileges which we might vainly seek in some countries boasting a liberal constitution.

It has been written, and commonly believed, in Europe, that the Chinese are forced to follow the trade of their fathers, that no one can change his place of abode without the permission of the Mandarins; in short, that they are subject to a host of restrictions, repulsive to the feelings of the European. We do not know what has given rise to these prejudices, for it is very certain that throughout the Empire each man follows the profession that suits him best, or none at all, without the Government interfering in the least. Every man is free to please himself, to become an artisan, doctor, schoolmaster, agriculturist, or tradesman, without having need of a licence or permission of any kind.

As regards travelling, nowhere can there exist greater freedom and independence of motion; each citizen may wander about among the eighteen provinces, and settle where he pleases, undisturbed by any public functionary. No one interferes with the traveller, who is sure never to encounter a *gendarme* demanding his passport. If the Chinese Government should unhappily take into their heads one fine day to adopt the ingenious invention of passports, poor missionaries would find themselves in a very lamentable condition. They would be unable to stir a step without false passports, which they might, no doubt, easily obtain by bribery; but this would be sorely against their consciences.

There is a law existing which enjoins the Chinese to remain within the limits of the Empire, and not to go vagabondising among foreigners, acquiring bad habits, and destroying the fruit of their good education; but the numerous emigrations of Chinese to the English, Dutch, and Spanish colonies, as well as to California, prove that this regulation is not very strictly enforced. It is written in the Statute Book, like many others equally disregarded.

The liberty to traverse the various parts of the country unobstructed is almost indispensable to these people, continually as they are engaged in commercial operations. Of course the least impediment to free motion would check the great system of commerce which is the life and soul of this vast empire.

The freedom of association is as necessary to the Chinese as that of locomotion, and they possess it as completely. With the exception of the secret societies aiming at the overthrow of the Mantchou dynasty, and which are pursued with the utmost severity by

Government, all societies are allowed, and the Chinese have a remarkable aptitude for forming them. There are societies for all trades and professions; robbers and beggars even have their associations; nobody stands alone in his sphere. It sometimes happens that the citizens unite to watch over the observance of the laws in places where the authorities are too weak or too negligent to maintain order. We have ourselves witnessed efforts of this kind which were attended with very satisfactory results.

Gaming is prohibited in China, but it is nevertheless carried on everywhere with an almost unequalled passion. One large village, situated near to our mission, and not far from the Great Wall, was celebrated for its professional gamblers. One day, the chief of a considerable family, who himself was in the habit of playing, made up his mind to reform the village. He therefore invited the principal inhabitants to a banquet, and towards the end of the repast he rose to address his guests, made some observations on the evil consequences of gaming, and proposed to them to form an association for the extirpation of this vice from their village. The proposal was at first received with astonishment; but finally, after a serious consultation, it was adopted. An act was drawn up and signed by all the associates, in which they bound themselves not only to abstain from playing, but to watch the other inhabitants, and seize upon all gamblers taken in the fact, who should be immediately carried before the tribunal to be punished according to the rigour of the law. The existence of the society was made known in the village, with the warning that it was resolved and ready for action.

Some days afterwards, three most determined gamblers, who had not taken the manifesto in earnest, were surprised with the cards in their hands. They were bound and carried before the tribunal of the nearest town, where they were severely beaten and heavily fined. We stayed some time in this part of the country, and can testify to the efficacy of this measure in correcting the prevailing vice of the village. So striking, indeed, was the success of the association, that many others were organised in the neighbourhood with the same object.

Springing spontaneously to life, unaided by any government influence, these societies sometimes present a truly formidable aspect, and exercise their authority with an energy and audacity which the proudest Mandarins might envy.

Not far from the place where the anti-gambling society had flourished, there arose a much more redoubtable association. This part of the country is inhabited by a population partially Chinese,

partially Mongol, and is intersected by mountains, valleys, and steppes. The villages scattered amongst them have not been considered of sufficient importance by Government to be confided to the care of Mandarins. Deprived of the restraint of authority, this wild region had become the resort of many bands of robbers and miscreants, who exercised their trade with impunity throughout the neighbourhood, both by day and night. They pillaged flocks and crops, lay in wait for travellers in the defiles of the mountains, pitilessly stripped them of all their property, and often put them to death; sometimes they went so far as to attack a village and lay it waste. We ourselves have often been obliged to traverse this dreadful district to visit our converts, but it was always necessary to assemble in great numbers, and go well armed. Many times had the Mandarins of the nearest town been petitioned for assistance, but none of them had dared to engage in a conflict with this army of banditti.

But that which the Mandarins dared not attempt, a simple villager undertook and accomplished. "Since the Mandarins either cannot or will not come to our assistance," said he, "we must protect ourselves; let us form a *houi*." The houis, or societies of the Chinese, are always inaugurated with a feast. Regardless of expense, the villagers killed an old bullock, and sent letters of invitation to the villages all round. Everybody approved the idea, and the society was entitled *Lao-niou-houi*, or "Society of the Old Bull," in remembrance of the inauguration feast. The regulations were brief and simple,

The members were to enrol as many people as possible in their ranks. They bound themselves to be always ready to aid each other in the capture of any robber, great or small.

Every robber or receiver of stolen goods was to have his head cut off immediately upon arrest, all form of trial being dispensed with, and the value of the object stolen not being taken into account. As it was easy to foresee that these proceedings would entail disputes with the tribunals, the whole society was responsible for each member, and took upon itself collectively to answer for all heads cut off.

This formidable society immediately commenced operations with unexampled energy and unity of purpose; heads of robbers, both great and small, fell with amazing and awful rapidity, and one night the Associates assembled silently in great numbers to take a *tsey-ouo* or *Robbers' Nest*. This was a notorious village lying at the bottom of a mountain gorge; the Society of the Old Bull surrounded it on all sides, set fire to the houses, and all the inhabi-

tants, men, women, and children, were burnt or massacred. Two days after this frightful expedition, we ourselves beheld the yet smoking ruins of the Robbers' Nest.

It was not long before all the brigands of the country were exterminated or intimidated, and property was respected to such a point that the people would pass even a lost thing lying in the road without venturing to touch it.

These rapid and sanguinary executions began to make a noise in the neighbouring towns. The relations of the victims besieged the tribunals with their complaints, and loudly demanded the death of the assassins, as they called the Associates. Faithful to their oath, the society presented themselves in a body to answer all accusations, and contest the actions brought against them. They were by no means dismayed, having foreseen this probable termination to their efforts from the beginning. The trial was carried to the Criminal Court of Pekin, which approved the proceedings of the society, and banished a number of the functionaries whose negligence had caused all the disturbance. It was thought desirable, nevertheless, to bring the society under the authority of the Mandarins, and legalise its existence: the regulations were modified, and each member was required to wear a badge, delivered by the Mandarin of the district. The name of Lao-niou-houi was replaced by that of *Tai-ping-ché* or "Agency for the Public Peace," and this was the title which the society bore when we left the country on our way to Thibet.

From what we have just narrated, it may be seen that the Chinese make great use of their freedom of association, and are not such slaves to their Mandarins as is believed in Europe. Liberty of the press is another ancient institution of China, which we Europeans fancy we have invented, though in France we do not seem able to make it take root in the soil. Sometimes people seem enthusiastic in defence of this liberty: it is a fever, a delirium; and then, again, they no longer care for it, and seem, on the contrary, charmed at being deprived of the power of writing and printing their thoughts.

The Chinese say that the barbarians of the Western seas are too hot-blooded; they cannot take things coolly, and do not in the least understand the just medium that Confucius speaks of.

"We Chinese," they say, "print whatever we like; books, pamphlets, circulars, and placards, without any interference from Government. We may even print for ourselves at discretion, provided we do not find it too troublesome, and have money enough to get the types carved. We do not abuse this liberty;

we print what may amuse or instruct the public, without prejudice to the five cardinal virtues and the three social relations. We do not meddle much in public affairs, because we are persuaded that the Empire would not be well governed if 300,000,000 of individuals attempted each to make it go his own way. It does sometimes happen, indeed, that books are printed which might trouble the public peace and throw disrespect on authority, and on such occasions the Mandarins seek out the author of the crime and punish him severely. But this is no reason to prevent others from expressing their thoughts and composing books; the misdemeanor of a bad citizen should not entail the punishment of the whole nation. It seems that this is not the way in the countries beyond the Western seas; and it is not surprising, for we know that different nations have different tastes and dispositions. It is the disposition of the Western people to be excited to anger sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another; it is their taste to think their governments good one day and bad the next: it is evident that if such people were suffered to have as much liberty as we enjoy, there would be no end to confusion and disturbance. It may be good sometimes to change governments, but such alterations should not be rapid or frequent. One of our wisest philosophers has said, 'Unhappy the nation which is badly governed; but yet more unhappy the nation which, having a tolerable government, is not wise enough to keep it.'"

Although, when once plunged into rebellion, the Chinese yield to every excess of hatred, anger, and revenge, it is yet true that they do not ordinarily meddle in politics or public affairs. Were it not so, a nation of 300,000,000 persons could scarcely have a moment's repose, with such elements of discord and insurrection amongst them as the freedom of association and the liberty of the press.

The Chinese have another institution, which, though good and praiseworthy in itself, might become a powerful agent for the excitement and fomentation of popular passions in the hands of turbulent spirits; we speak of the *chouo-chou-ti*, or *Public Readers*. This is a numerous class of men, who travel about to all the towns and villages, reading to the people interesting portions of their history, accompanied always by their own comments and reflections. These lecturers are commonly good speakers, with a copious flow of words, and are often very eloquent.

The Chinese love to listen to them; they gather round them in all sorts of public places, at the street corners, and in the entrances of tribunals and pagodas,—and it is easy to perceive, merely at

the sight of their faces, how lively an interest they take in these historic narratives.

Now and then the reader stops to rest, and he takes advantage of these pauses to make a collection; for he has no other revenue than the contributions of his auditors, and they are generally liberal enough. It is thus that in China, the land of despotism and tyranny, clubs are constantly held in the open air, though it is greatly to be doubted whether certain nations who think themselves far advanced in liberal ideas would not be much alarmed to see such a custom introduced among them.

It is general in Europe to regard Asia as the classic ground of despotism and slavery, yet nothing is more opposed to the truth. We do not think the reader will find the following passage too long, from the pen of M. Abel Rémusat, whose authority is great in such matters, because he regards the East with the just and impartial eye of a man who can rise above common prejudices and rest his opinion only on the truths of history.

"Amid all the changes of Oriental governments, there is one striking and unvarying feature, the absence of that odious tyranny and debasing servitude which have been represented as casting their dark shadow over the whole of Asia. I except the Mussulman states, which claim a separate study.

"Everywhere else the sovereign power, though surrounded by imposing state, is subject to severe—I had almost said to the only effectual—restrictions. Asiatic monarchs have been regarded as despots, because they are addressed kneeling, and approached only with the humblest prostrations; and those who have looked no further judge from appearances. Yet, religion, customs, and prejudices oppose invincible obstacles to the free exercise of their will.

"A king in India, according to the divine lawgiver Manou, is like the sun; he dazzles all eyes, he is fire and air, sun and moon; no human creature dare contemplate him. But this superior being cannot lay a tax on a Brahmin, if he should be dying of want, nor make a labourer into a merchant, nor infringe, in the slightest degree, the injunctions of a code which is looked upon as revelation, and which regulates civil interests as well as religious doctrines.

"The Emperor of China is the Son of Heaven, and when a subject approaches his throne he strikes the ground nine times with his forehead; but he can only choose a sub-prefect out of the list of candidates presented to him by the Mandarins; and if during an eclipse he should neglect to fast and to acknowledge publicly the faults of his ministry, a hundred thousand pamphlets, authorised

by the law, would recall him to his duty in the observance of ancient customs. We should never think of erecting such boundaries to regal power; but in the East many such institutions set limits to the caprices of tyranny; and a power thus restrained can scarcely be called despotic.

"I have said *institutions*, and this modern and European word may seem misapplied when speaking of a half-civilised nation, who are ignorant alike of budgets, *comptes rendus*, and bills of indemnity. It does not signify here an act issued all at once by a legislative assembly to inform a nation that, after a certain day, they will have to adopt new customs and follow new principles, allowing always a reasonable time for change of habits and opinions. In this sense I confess that a great part of Asia has no institutions. Those laws and principles which guide the actions of the strong, and protect to a certain extent the rights of the weak, are merely the results of national character; they are founded on the prejudices of the people, on their social disposition and intellectual necessities. It is evident how deeply these are graven in their hearts, since no one has thought it necessary to print them. China is an exception in this case; she is in advance of other Asiatic nations, and has a right to European esteem, for she has long been in possession of a written constitution, and is in the habit of altering it from time to time, and introducing modifications. It even descends to details neglected by us; for, besides the functions of the supreme courts and the administrative hierarchy which are there determined, there are in it particular statutes to regulate the calendar, weights and measures, the division of the provinces, and, moreover, *music*, which has always been an object of importance in the government of the Empire.

"If, then, by despot is meant an absolute master, disposing at will of the property and life of his subjects, using and abusing a boundless power, I can see none such in Asia; everywhere ancient manners and customs, and ideas received, even though erroneous, offer to the regal power restrictions more embarrassing than written regulations, and which a tyrant can only defy by exposing himself to destruction. I see only a few places where nothing is respected, where moderation is unknown, and might only is right; and this is where the weakness or imprudence of the natives has suffered the establishment of foreigners from distant lands,—men whose sole object is to make a fortune as rapidly as possible, and then to return and enjoy it in their native country. They have no pity for men of another race, no sympathy with the aborigines, whose language they cannot understand, in whose tastes, habits,

and prejudices they do not share. Harmony, founded on reason and justice, cannot exist between interests so diametrically opposed. Force alone can maintain this state of things; absolute despotism is necessary to support a handful of rulers eager to seize on everything, amid a multitude who deny their right to anything. This is the state of things in the European colonies of Asia.

"They are a singular race, these Europeans, and their proceedings would make a strange impression on an impartial judge, if such a one could be found on the earth. Intoxicated by their own progress in modern times, especially by their superiority in the art of war, they look upon all other families of the human race with supreme disdain, as though all were born to admire and serve them, and that of them it was written: '*God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.*' All must think like them and work for them; they walk abroad upon the earth exhibiting to the humbled nations their faces as the type of beauty, their ideas as the standard of intelligence, their arguments as the very basis of all reason; everything is to be measured by their scale; and who contests the justice of this arrangement?

"To each other, indeed, they still show some deference. In their quarrels among their various countries they observe certain principles, and murder one another according to fixed rules. But it is only within the limits of Europe that this holds good, and it is thought superfluous to observe the law of nations towards uncivilised people. Though confident of the skill of their soldiers and the excellence of their arms, the Europeans pursue a cautious policy. Inglorious conquerors and ungenerous victors, they attack the Orientals as if they had nothing to fear, and treat them when subdued as formidable enemies.

"Achieving by diplomacy what they have failed to do in battle, they victimise the natives alike in peace and war; binding them to pernicious alliances, imposing conditions on their trade, occupying their ports, annexing their provinces, and treating as rebels the tribes who cannot submit to such a yoke. It is true that they moderate their proceedings towards those states which yet boast some vigour, and they show a degree of consideration for Canton and Nangasaki, which would be absurd in regard to Palembeng or Colombo.*

"By a perversion of ideas, more strange perhaps than the abuse

* This was written in 1829. M. Abel Rémusat would probably have omitted this sentence had he written in 1840, after the English war with China.

of power, our writers take part with our disappointed adventurers, blame the Asiatics for precautions rendered prudent and natural by our own conduct, and exclaim against their want of hospitality. We are indignant at their being suspicious of such dangerous neighbours, and when they decline the disinterested advances of our merchants, cry out that they reject the benefits of civilisation. Civilisation, as far as they are concerned, appears to mean, cultivating the ground industriously, that the Europeans may be supplied with cotton, silk, and spice, paying taxes to them regularly, and changing, without a murmur, their laws and customs, in spite of tradition and climate. The Nogay Tartars have made great progress of late years; they have abandoned the nomadic life of their fathers, and the tax-gatherer knows where to find them when tribute is due. The ancient subjects of Queen Obeïra are much improved since the days of Captain Cook, for they have embraced Methodism, and attend divine service in black cloth coats, thus furnishing a new market for the manufactures of Somerset and Gloucester. Travellers have lately remarked with pleasure a prince of the Sandwich Isles holding his court clad in a red coat and waistcoat; and it was only to be regretted that the heat of the climate prevented his completing the costume.

"But, however imperfect and awkward these imitations may be, however grotesque and useless, they are to be encouraged for their possible consequences. The time *may* come, when the Hindoos will use our muslins instead of weaving their own, when China, instead of exporting silk, shall import it, when the Esquimaux shall shiver in calico shirts, or the inhabitants of the Torrid Zone melt under our felt hats and woollen garments.

"Let these people give up their own manufactures in favour of European trade; let them renounce their ideas, their language, and literature, all in short that composes their national individuality, and learn to think, feel, and speak like us, purchasing these useful lessons at the price of their territory, and independence; let them be complaisant to our academicians, devoted to the interests of our merchants, tractable and submissive in all things, and they may be allowed to have made some steps towards civilisation, and permitted to take rank at a great distance behind the privileged people, the race *par excellence* to whom it is given to possess, to govern, to comprehend, and to instruct." *

These remarks may be thought a little severe by general readers; but whoever has traversed Asia and visited the European colonies,

* Mélanges Asiatiques.

will be forced to confess that the conquered race is almost everywhere treated harshly and insolently, by men who pique themselves on their civilisation, and sometimes on their Christianity.

We have strayed very far from Han-tchouan and the happy Mandarin to whom the town solemnly presented a pair of boots at the moment of his departure. The reader has doubtless forgotten that it was *à propos* of this manifestation of popular feeling that we were led to speak of the elements of liberty that exist in China, and which sometimes exhibit themselves in such a curious guise.

The greatest panegyric pronounced by the people of Han-tchouan on their favourite magistrate was, that he always administered justice in person and in public. Among the Chinese magistracy this is now a rare merit; for things are fallen into such decay in that unhappy country, that the greater part of the Mandarins, whether from idleness or from reluctance to display their inability, never administer justice themselves. They sit in a private cabinet, generally separated from the tribunal by a partition only. The complainants discuss their affairs in presence of the scribes and functionaries, who retire from time to time to report progress, according to their own ideas, to the unworthy judge, as he lies on a comfortable divan, much more busied with his pipe and cup of tea than with the life or fortune of the hapless litigant. The judge is not even troubled to pronounce sentence; it is brought to him ready drawn up, and he has only to put his seal to it. This method has become so prevalent that a magistrate who takes the trouble to preside in person, and interrogate the disputants himself, is regarded as an extraordinary man, worthy of public admiration.

We were obliged to stop at Han-tchouan for two whole days, during which the wind blew with incessant violence. Nobody thought of embarking on the Blue River, for we had not forgotten the disastrous wreck of the Secretary of Song-tche-hien, and our repeated grounding on the bank.

Although little desirous of retaining the charge of our precious and illustrious persons, the Mandarins of Han-tchouan preferred it to incurring the responsibility of a wreck. Regretting, however, to lose the advantage of this little storm, which refreshed the air delightfully, we ourselves proposed to our guides to continue our journey by land, hoping that the wind would not be strong enough to tear our palanquins off the shoulders of the bearers. But Master Ting objected, saying that the perils of wreck were much more imminent in the land journey than the river transit. We could not understand this until he further informed us that in leaving Han-tchouan it would be impossible to avoid water-carriage, as the

river lay on one side, and a great lake on the other, — one of the two we must necessarily cross. The boats with which the lake was navigated were so frail and ill-built that it was impossible they could resist the force of the storm; we were therefore obliged to resign ourselves to our fate, and wait patiently.

As soon as the wind abated, we resumed our journey by land. Five years before, a French missionary had followed the same route, also escorted by Mandarins and their satellites, but under very different circumstances. We were free, surrounded by homage, and travelling in comfort; he, on the contrary, was loaded with chains, and assailed with ceaseless insults by the pitiless wretches who accompanied him; yet in the eyes of the true faith was his progress a triumphal march, for he was going full of strength and courage to engage in a sainted struggle. After enduring long and frightful torments with unalterable constancy in the capital of Hou-pé, he perished gloriously with the palm of martyrdom in his grasp, and followed by the admiration of the whole Catholic world. As we travelled along the route from Han-tchouan, sanctified by the sufferings of the venerable Perboyre, the details of that long martyrdom which we ourselves had had the consolation of narrating to our friends in Europe, arose once more in our minds, filling us with sweet emotion; our eyes were wet, but the tears shed over the memory of a martyr are more those of pleasure than of pain.

For two hours we followed narrow tortuous paths, now winding among hills of red earth, where cotton and indigo grew in abundance, now running through valleys between verdant plantations of rice. Soon we caught sight of the lake *Ping-hou*, whose blue surface, slightly ruffled by a light breeze, glittered in the sun as if covered with innumerable diamonds. Three boats were lying ready for us at the bank; our party was soon embarked; long sails made of bamboo, and folded like fans, were quickly hoisted, and we pushed off. The wind being insufficient, its place was supplied by numbers of rowers; towards noon, however, the breeze strengthened, and carried us rapidly over a magnificent lake. We encountered boats of every size and shape, carrying passengers and merchandise, as well as numerous fishing smacks, distinguished by the black nets hung on the mast. The various vessels passing and repassing with their yellow sails and striped flags, the vague indefinite murmur floating around, the aquatic birds hovering over the lake and diving suddenly after their prey, all this presented a most charming and animated picture to the eye.

We passed several floating islands, those curious productions of

Chinese ingenuity, which no other people seem ever to have thought of. These floating islands are enormous rafts, generally constructed of bamboos, which resist the decomposing influence of the water for a long time. Upon the raft is laid a tolerably thick bed of vegetable soil; and, thanks to the patient labours of a few families of aquatic agriculturists, the astonished traveller beholds a whole colony lying on the surface of the water,—pretty houses with their gardens, as well as fields and plantations of every sort. The inhabitants of these floating farms appear to enjoy peace and abundance. During the leisure time which is not occupied by the culture of their rice-fields they employ themselves in fishing, which is at the same time a pastime and a source of profit; and often, after gathering a crop of grain from the surface of the lake, they cast their nets and bring up a harvest of fish from its depths; for these waters team with creatures fit for the use of man. Many birds, particularly swallows and pigeons, build their nests in these floating isles, and enliven the peaceful and poetic solitude.

Towards the middle of the lake we encountered one of these islands on its way to take up a fresh position. It moved very slowly, though there was a good deal of wind, and large sails were attached to the houses as well as to each corner of the island: the inhabitants, men, women, and children, lent their strength to aid its progress, by working at large oars; but their efforts did not seem materially to increase the speed at which they moved. However, these peculiar mariners do not probably trouble themselves much about delay, as they are sure of sleeping on land, at whatever pace they may go. Their migrations are often without any apparent motive. Like the Mongols in their vast prairies, they wander at will; but, more fortunate than these latter, they have constructed for themselves a little solitude in the midst of civilisation, and unite the charms of a nomadic life to the advantages of a sedentary abode.

These floating islands are to be found on all the great lakes of China, and at first sight present an enchanting picture of happiness and plenty, whilst it is impossible not to admire the ingenious industry of these Chinese, so singular in all their proceedings. But when you consider the cause of their construction, the labour and patience necessary for their creation, by people unable to find a corner of the solid earth on which to establish themselves, the smiling picture assumes a darker tint, and the mind endeavours vainly to penetrate the future of a race so numerous that the land will no longer hold it, and which has sought a resting-place on the surface of the waters.

The traveller in the Celestial Empire, reflecting on its countless myriads of inhabitants, whose numbers increase year by year with frightful rapidity, is almost tempted to wish that China should experience one of those exterminating scourges by which Providence arrests from time to time the rapid increase of too fertile races.

The population of China has been a subject of much debate among European authors, who had no means of coming to exact conclusions. The Chinese statistics are, nevertheless, kept with care; and in each province the heads of families are required to inscribe their numbers in registers kept for the purpose, and the total numbers are collected and published.

The method of registration has varied much even in modern times; numerous classes of non-ratepaying individuals have been omitted from the census, and hence results the difference in the calculation of the Chinese population presented to us at different times.

The three following accounts appear to be equally authentic, though the larger number surpasses the smallest by 183,000,000:—

In 1743, according to	Father Arniot . . .	150,265,475
In 1761, „	„ Father Hallerstein . .	198,214,552
In 1794, „	„ Lord Macartney . .	333,000,000

The most recent census taken under the Mantchou dynasty raises the total number to 361,000,000. We have not the information necessary to examine this calculation and decide with certainty, but we do not doubt the correctness of the estimate in spite of the enormous number registered.

It is easy to form perfectly opposite ideas of the population of China, according to the route by which you traverse it. If, for example, in the central provinces you travel along the roads, you would be led to believe the country much less populous than it really is. The villages are few and far between, the waste lands so considerable that you might at times fancy yourself in the deserts of Tartary. But traverse the same province by the canals or rivers, and the aspect of the country is entirely changed. Often you pass huge cities, containing not less than two or three millions of inhabitants, whilst smaller towns and great villages follow each other in almost uninterrupted succession. It is difficult to conceive where these numberless multitudes, whose mere habitations seem to cover the whole surface of the land, can find means of subsistence, and the estimate of three hundred and sixty-one millions would seem rather under than over the truth.

A celebrated Chinese moralist, Te-siou, refers to "*tien*," or heaven, the alternate increase and diminution of the population of the Empire.

"The events," he says, "which cause the increase and diminution of mankind are so various and so closely connected, so slow and so efficacious, that policy and foresight are powerless to oppose them. A man must be very ignorant of our history to see only a chain of natural causes in the hidden manœuvres of heaven with the generations of mankind, increasing or reducing them according to its views for the whole Empire. A man must be very little of a philosopher not to see that war, pest, famine, and great revolutions confound every system, from the impossibility of foreseeing their causes, arresting their ravages, or calculating their ultimate effects on the population. The experience of past dynasties is lost to the present generation; the very measures successful in one century may become destructive in the next."

Though we respect the caution of the Chinese moralist, it seems to us, nevertheless, that several secondary causes might be assigned for the prodigious population of China; such as the general eagerness of parents to marry their children, the shame attached to dying without descendants, the frequent adoptions which perpetuate families, the retention of property in the direct line from the incapacity of girls to inherit, the immutability of taxes, which, always imposed on the land only, fall indirectly on the merchant and artisan, the marriage of soldiers and sailors, the wise policy of conferring nobility only on employments, which, by distinguishing men and not families, prevents their rank becoming hereditary, and destroys the vain prejudice of *mésalliances*, the frugal way of life of all classes, — all these causes, perhaps, favour the rapid increase of the Chinese population, but it is doubtless referable above all to the profound peace which the Empire has enjoyed for the last two hundred years.

At the present moment this peace exists no longer; an insurrection, which broke out three years ago, threatens a general movement throughout the country, and the fall of the Tartar dynasty. If this revolution should resemble those which have preceded it, the details of which in the History of China it is impossible to read without shuddering, if civil war with its horrible train of massacres and incendiarism should continue much longer, the population will be frightfully reduced, and the Chinese who survive the carnage will be able to find abodes, without as now having recourse to floating islands on the surface of the lakes.

Just as our pleasant journey on the Ping-hou was approaching

its termination, we encountered a long file of fishing boats which were rowing back to their ports. Instead of nets they carried a great number of cormorants, perched on the edges of the boats.

It is a curious spectacle to see these creatures engaged in fishing, diving into the water, and always coming up with a fish in their beak. As the Chinese fear the vigorous appetite of their feathered associates, they fasten round their necks an iron ring, large enough to allow of their breathing, but too small to admit the passage of the fish they seize: to prevent their straying about in the water and wasting the time destined for work, a cord is attached to the ring and to one claw of the cormorant, by which he is pulled up when inclined to stay too long under water. When tired, he is permitted to rest for a few minutes, but if he abuses this indulgence and forgets his business, a few strokes of a bamboo recall him to duty, and the poor diver patiently resumes his laborious occupation. In passing from one fishing ground to another, the cormorants perch side by side on the edge of the boat, and their instinct teaches them to range themselves of their own accord in nearly equal numbers on each side, so as not to disturb the equilibrium of the frail vessel; we saw them thus ranged throughout the little fleet of fishing smacks on Lake Ping-hou.

The cormorant is larger than the domestic duck; it has a short neck and long beak, slightly hooked at the end. Never very elegant in appearance, it is perfectly hideous after it has passed the day in fishing. Its wet and tumbled plumage stands on end all over its meagre body, and it hunches itself up till nothing is to be seen but a frightful shapeless lump.

Having passed Lake Ping-hou, we re-entered our palanquins and arrived towards night at *Han-yang,* a large town on the banks of the Blue River. The shop-keepers were already lighting their lanterns, and numerous groups of artisans, who had finished their daily labour, were on their way to the theatre, singing and frolicking as they went, while at the street corners spectators were gathered round jugglers and public readers. Everything wore the lively animated air of a densely populated city, when, after the fatigues of a day of toil, all feel the necessity of a little rest and amusement.

The public promenade is a thing unknown to the Chinese, who cannot perceive either its charms or its wholesomeness. Those who have some notion of European manners think it very singular, if not utterly absurd, that we should find pleasure in walking for its own sake. When they hear that we consider it a refreshment and amusement, they regard us as very eccentric, or entirely devoid of common sense.

The Chinese of the interior whom business takes to Canton or Macao, always go the first thing to look at the Europeans on the promenade. It is one of the most amusing of sights for them. They squat in rows along the sides of the quays, smoking their pipes and fanning themselves, contemplating the while, with a satirical and contemptuous eye, the English and Americans who promenade up and down from one end to the other, keeping time with admirable precision. Europeans who go to China are apt to consider the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire very odd and supremely ridiculous, and the provincial Chinese at Canton and Macao pay back this sentiment with interest. It is very amusing to hear their sarcastic remarks on the appearance of the devils of the West, their utter astonishment at sight of their tight-fitting garments, their wonderful trousers, and prodigious round hats, like chimney-pots, — the shirt-collars adapted to cut off the ears, and making a frame around such grotesque faces, with long noses and blue eyes, no beard or moustache, but a handful of curly hair on each cheek. The shape of the dress-coat puzzles them above everything. They try in vain to account for it, calling it a half-garment, because it is impossible to make it meet over the breast, and because there is nothing in front to correspond to the tails behind. They admire the judgment and exquisite taste of putting buttons as big as sapecks behind the back where they never have anything to button. How much handsomer they think themselves with their narrow, oblique, black eyes, high cheek bones, and little round noses, their shaven crowns and magnificent pig-tails hanging almost to their heels. Add to all these natural graces a conical hat, covered with red fringe, an ample tunic with large sleeves, and black satin boots, with a white sole of immense thickness, and it must be evident to all that a European cannot compare in appearance with a Chinese.

But it is in their way of life that they hold themselves most particularly superior to us. When they see Europeans spend hours in walking for the mere sake of the exercise, they ask if it is not more conformable to civilised ideas to sit down quietly to smoke and drink tea when you have nothing else to do, or, still better, to go to bed at once. The idea of meeting to spend the greater part of the night in amusements and gaiety has not yet presented itself to them. They are like our worthy ancestors before they hit upon the plan of prolonging the day till midnight and the night till noon. All the Chinese, even of the highest class, go to bed in time to get up at sunrise, New Year's Day and certain family festivals excepted. On these occasions they do not allow themselves a moment's repose.

In general, they follow the course of the heavenly bodies in their arrangement of day and night. At those hours which, in the great cities of Europe, are the most noisy and tumultuous, the cities of China enjoy the most profound tranquillity. Every one has retired into his family; all the shops are closed; the boatmen, the mountebanks, the public readers, have finished their sittings, and nothing like business is to be seen, except, perhaps, in a few theatres which depend mostly on the favour of the working classes, who have only the night at their disposal, in which to enjoy the favourite amusement of seeing a play.

We took more than an hour to traverse the long streets of *Han-yang*. At last they deposited us at the extremity of a suburb, in a sort of house which we know not how to describe. It was not a Communal Palace, nor a tribunal, nor an inn, nor a prison, nor a pagoda. It was, we were told, an establishment destined for a variety of uses, which the authorities of the place had prepared for our reception. We were received very coldly by an old Chinese, a little retired Mandarin, who introduced us into a spacious saloon, the only furniture of which consisted in a few dislocated arm-chairs, and its whole illumination in a large red candle made of some vegetable fat, which gave out, together with much smoke, a dull and lugubrious light.

The old Chinese filled his pipe, lighted it at the candle, sat himself down at the end of a bench, and began to smoke, without even looking at us. As the behaviour of this individual was little to our taste, we took no notice of him, but began to promenade the room at the risk of being considered barbarians. An entire day passed in a boat or in a palanquin gave us, we thought, the right to stretch our legs a little.

While we promenaded, and while the retired old Mandarin silently smoked his pipe, our conductors had disappeared. We remained for a long time thus, and found the position rather unpleasant, since no Mandarin of Han-yang, either great or small, had honoured us with his presence, and no one had even had the politeness to order us a cup of tea, though, as it was very late, some refreshments would have been by no means superfluous. Our Chinese always maintained the same attitude, without troubling himself about us in the smallest degree, and we on our side affected not to pay any attention to him. At length Master Ting appeared, and we asked him what all this meant, and what was to come of it, but saw by his surprise that he understood the situation no better than we did ourselves. However, it must end somehow. He then began to question the old Chinese, who was filling

his pipe for about the tenth time, and he replied, without disturbing himself, and scarcely looking at us, that no one had given him any orders about us, that he did not know who we were, where we came from, or where we were going to; that he was himself very much surprised at seeing so many people suddenly invade the establishment of which he was the guardian at so late an hour. After he had thus expressed his thoughts very phlegmatically, he replaced his pipe in his mouth, and began to smoke again. It was evidently impossible to enter into negotiation with a person of this stamp, so we determined upon paying a visit to the Prefect.

Our reception was polite enough, but extremely cold. The Prefect said he thought we should have gone that same evening to the capital of the province, on the opposite bank of the river, and consequently he had not made any preparation to receive us. "Since you are not going to Ou-tchang-fou to-night," he added, "I will go and give orders to have you taken care of in the House of Guests, whither they have conducted you." This meant that the Prefect had played us a trick *à la Chinoise*, to spare himself the expense and trouble of giving us an official reception. He knew very well, better than we did, that it was not possible for us to go in one day from Han-tchouan to Ou-tchang-fou, and that we must necessarily pass the night at Han-yang. We thought it was not worth while to be angry about this, and we returned quietly to the above-mentioned House of Guests, with the prospect of finding our imperturbable Chinese still in the same place smoking his pipe.

We had, however, committed a great fault in taking leave of the Prefect so politely, and without speaking a little sharply to him; for, imagining that we were very easily satisfied, he did not fail to take advantage of it. We returned to our Chinese, whom, sure enough, we found still seated on his bench, and the red candle, though burnt down to a small end, was still alight, its great wick surrounded by a little flame and a great deal of thick smoke. One of the Prefect's servants soon presented himself, bearing a basket divided into several compartments, which contained a slender supper. On seeing him, the guardian of the House of Guests rose, and went into a neighbouring apartment to fetch a table, which he placed against the wall, and upon it the aforesaid red candle, snuffing it very dexterously by giving a fillip to the wick. Master Ting, who was hungry, had already taken his place on one side of the table, but his visage lengthened piteously when he saw the nature of the banquet sent us by the Prefect. A great bowl of rice boiled in water, placed between two little plates, one contain-

ing some morsels of salt fish, and the other some slices of bacon ; this was the supper.

The Prefect of Han-yang seemed inclined to abuse the privilege he thought he possessed of treating us according to his will and pleasure. Master Ting was foaming with rage, and threatened to eat up the poor servant who had brought the basket. We had to exert all our influence to restrain him, and make him understand that it was not fair to impute to this poor man the offence of the bacon and salt fish ; but our vanity was so mortified at the proceeding, that we completely departed from the line of conduct we had marked out for ourselves in our relations with the Mandarins, and yielding to a puerile emotion of pride, we told the servant to carry back the viands to his master, and thank him for his obliging generosity, and at the same time we begged Master Ting to go and order us a proper supper at the nearest tavern, since we meant to live at our own expense at Han-yang.

The Prefect's major-domo carried away the bowl of rice and the accessories, and soon afterwards we were doing the honours of a magnificent supper that we gave to the Mandarins of our escort, at the expense of two ounces of silver. It appeared to us at the time that we were acting with incomparable dignity, and that we had got most majestically out of the scrape. But our self-conceit blinded us, and hindered us from seeing that, after all, we had done a very stupid thing. We understood this the next day, after a night's rest had enabled us to take a more tranquil view of our position. We had forgotten that we were in China, and that Mandarins were by no means the men who could have any feeling of honour piqued. What we ought to have done would have been to have ordered an entertainment of the first class, and have made the Prefect pay for it, and after that to have remained one or two days at Han-yang. This strange system was so well adapted to the Chinese character, that it had succeeded perfectly all along the road. But we had been foolish enough, in a moment of anger, to abandon it, and we had to suffer for our folly ; for after that we had incredible trouble to recover our former position.

We quitted Han-yang with a lively feeling of satisfaction, without even regretting that ancient guardian of the House of Guests, who dismissed us with the same grace and amiability that he had exhibited in our reception.

The journey we were to make that day, though not long, was not, it was said, altogether without dangre. We had only to cross the Blue River; and when we went to the shore we could see the vague and imperfectly defined outline of an immense town, almost

entirely enveloped in fog; this was *Ou-tchang-fou*, the capital of the province of Hou-pé, only separated from Han-yang by the river, which in this place resembles a great arm of the sea. Multitudes of enormous junks were moving rapidly down or slowly up this "River Child of the Sea," as the Chinese call it. The wind was blowing from the south, which was favourable enough for us, as we only wanted a side wind; but it was extremely violent, and as the passage-boats we found stationed at the shore appeared much too slight for stormy weather in these impetuous waters, we hesitated a little before embarking in them. The example, however, of many other travellers, who made no difficulty, having reassured us, we entered a boat, which soon carried us away with almost terrific rapidity. When we were near the middle of the river, we met with a squall that sent our boat so much on her side, that her sails for a moment touched the water. At length, after a passage of three quarters of an hour, we arrived without accident in the port of Ou-tchang-fou, where we were detained more than two hours opening a passage for ourselves through the prodigious mass of junks in the anchorage. After that, we had a real journey to go through the streets of this vast city; and it was afternoon by the time we were installed in our lodgings, not far from the Governor's Palace.

CHAP. XIV.

Bad Lodging in a little Pagoda. — Ou-tchang-fou, Capital of Hou-pé. — Limits of the Chinese Empire. — Mountains. — Rivers. — Lakes. — Climate. — Principal Productions. — Chinese Industry. — Causes of its Decline. — Former Exhibitions of the Productions of Arts. — Relations of the Chinese with Foreigners. — Present State of their Commerce with Europeans. — Internal Trade of China. — Interest of Money. — System of Chinese Economists upon Interest of Thirty per Cent. — Pecuniary Societies. — Immense Commercial Mart in the Centre of the Empire. — System of Canals. — Aptitude of the Chinese for Commerce. — Monetary System. — Influence of the Sapeck. — Infinitesimal Trade.

The place where we had been located since our arrival at Ou-tchang-fou was a little pagoda quite lately built, and of which the Bonzes had not yet taken possession. It was clean, but far from commodious. We had at our disposal but one narrow chamber, to which air and light only penetrated by a single skylight; it was opposite a high wall, and the heat in it was suffocating. All the Mandarins we saw promised to attend immediately to our request to be removed; but probably no one of them thought any more

about it, for we were still left pitilessly in this hothouse. We were suffering now the consequences of the diplomatic blunders we had made at Han-yang.

The little Mandarin of that town, who had been charged to take us across the Blue River to Ou-tchang-fou, had doubtless not failed to compromise us by saying that we were very good sort of people, and easy to cheat. In vain did Master Ting protest the contrary — no one believed him. They knew that when the supper sent to us by the Prefect of Han-yang did not please us, we had very quietly, and without making any complaint, ordered another at our own expense from the *restaurateur*. Thus there was no necessity for them to give themselves any trouble; we should always be quite content, if only they did not kill us.

Such were the consequences of a moment of weakness. We understood now how completely in the right we had been hitherto, in being obstinate and refractory with the Mandarins, who are always disposed to become the tyrants and persecutors of those who do not know how to make them tremble.

There was also, we found, another cause for the ill-will manifested towards us by the authorities of Ou-tchang-fou. Some months before our arrival in this town, a Spanish missionary had been discovered and arrested in the province. He had been brought to the capital, where he had had to undergo several judicial examinations, and after being harassed in various ways and detained long in the public prisons, he was taken to Macao (with a chain round his neck), conformably to the treaties concluded between the various European powers, at the conclusion of the war with the English. This good Spanish priest, whose patience and resignation greatly exceeded ours, had allowed the inhabitants of Ou-tchang-fou to assume a tone and deportment of which we now became the victims. If we complained, they replied that we ought to consider ourselves very fortunate that we were neither imprisoned nor put in irons. We ought to be full of gratitude for not having our throats cut. We considered, however, that it was our duty, not only for our own sakes, but for those of the missionaries who should come after us, to endeavour to combat these views. We formed our plan, therefore, and only waited a favourable moment for putting it in execution.

As our hot narrow cell was an extremely disagreeable place to stop in, we determined to take some walks in the town, in company with our dear Master Ting, who was longing exceedingly to see again his beloved province of Sse-tchouen, and to have nothing more to do with the barbarians of Hou-pé; but in order to be able to move

more freely through the streets, without exciting public attention, it was indispensable to lay aside provisionally our yellow caps and red girdles.

Ou-tchang-fou was already well known to us, for in the first year of our abode in China we had had occasion to visit this great town, one of the chief commercial places in the Empire, and communicating with all the other provinces by the Blue River. We have seen that Han-yang is opposite to Ou-tchang-fou; another immense town, called Han-keou, that is, "Mouth of Commerce," is still nearer to it, being situated at the confluence of a river that throws itself into the Yang-tse-kiang, almost under the walls of the capital. These three towns, standing in a triangle, in sight of one another, and only separated by the river, form a kind of heart, from which the prodigious commercial activity of China circulates to all parts of the Empire.

They are calculated to contain together nearly eight millions of inhabitants, and they are so closely connected by the perpetual going and coming of a multitude of vessels, that they may almost be said to form one.

This is the spot that must be visited by those who would wish to have an idea of the internal trade of China. But, before entering upon some details connected with the subject, which we hope may not be found without interest, it seems desirable to cast a glance at the geography and statistics of this vast and powerful Asiatic Empire, the richest, the most ancient, and the most populous existing on the face of the earth, or of which history has preserved any recollection.

China, properly so called, without counting its vast and numerous tributary kingdoms, is a great continental country, situated in the eastern and central parts of Asia. It is bounded to the south and east by the Pacific Ocean, to the north by the *Yn* chain of mountains and the great desert of Gobi, called in Chinese the "Sea of Sand," to the west by the mountains of Thibet, and to the south-west by the less elevated ranges that extend along the limits of the Burmese Empire and Tonquin.

Under the reign of *Kien-long*, second Emperor of the Mantchoo dynasty, three provinces were taken from the country formerly known under the names of Leao-tong, and Mantchuria, and were added to China. According to this arrangement, the present frontiers of the Empire follow the northern shore of the Gulf of Leao-tong, proceeding from *Chan-hai-kouan*, one of the gates of the Great Wall, to the mouth of the *Ya-lou:* from this point the frontier line leaves the coast of the gulf, and extends from west to

east across the peninsula of Corea, as far as the sea of Japan, following the shore of that sea in a north-easterly direction; it then proceeds northward to the point that marks the commencement of the Russian frontier, a little way to the north of the mouth of the Amour, or Black River. Thence the line which separates the two empires follows generally the chain of mountains of *Hing-ngan*, then proceeds south-westward as far as the Black River, which it crosses at its confluence with the Argoun, and stops at the lakes of Koulun and Bouir. At this place the Chinese frontier line quits the Russian, leaving between the two the country of the Khalkas and Mongolia; then stretches to the south-east as far as the Sangari, which it crosses at Bedoune, and goes on again till it joins the wooden palisade of Leao-tong; following this barrier from north-east to south-west, to its junction with the Great Wall, at a short distance to the west of Chan-hai-kouan.

The Chinese frontier then follows the Great Wall, proceeding, with various sinuosities westward to the Yellow River, and separating the country of the Mongols from the two provinces of Petcheli and Chan-si. After crossing the Yellow River, towards the middle of the branch which proceeds to the south, it runs first south-west and then north-west, between the country of the Ortoos on the north, and the province of Chen-si on the south; then joins the Yellow River a second time, towards the middle of that part of it which tends northward, crosses it, again taking a southerly course, after having embraced the territory of *Ning-hia;* and then coasts first the left and then the right bank as far as latitude 37°: from this point it leaves the river, turning to the north-west, until it has reached latitude 40°, in the department of *Sou-tcheou*, and continues to follow the same direction as far as 44°. That is the extremity of China on the north-west. The frontier then returns to the south-east, leaving the sandy deserts and the country of the *Kou-kou-noor;* and having reached *Si-ning*, it descends to the south, coasting successively the provinces of *Kan-sou* and Sse-tchouen. Its direction becomes a little westerly in the countries where the great rivers that flow from the high mountains of Thibet pour their waters into the immense stream, called by the Chinese, *par excellence*, Kiang, or The River. After this it turns again towards the east, proceeds, with various sinuosities, between the country of the Birmans and Cochin China on one side, and the provinces of Yan-nan and Kouan-si on the other, to the point whence we set out.

According to the frontier line we have just traced, it will be seen that China presents the form of a circle, or rather of an equilateral

parallelogram from which the angles have been cut off. It advances on the south to three degrees beyond the tropic of Cancer, and extends northward to latitude 41°, presenting, towards the north-east and north-west, two prolongations, of which one reaches beyond the 40th, and the other to the 56th parallel of north latitude. Without taking, for the present, these two prolongations into account, it will be seen that China is comprised between 20° and 42° of latitude, and 97° and 123° of longitude E. from Greenwich. Its entire area contains an extent of 1575 miles from north to south, and 1800 from east to west, or 2,835,000 square miles,—more than eight times the surface of France.

China forms a considerable portion of the immense slope from the mountains of Thibet to the shores of the Eastern Ocean. The mountains on its western side are dependencies of the great mountain mass of Central Asia, which is continued eastward by two principal ranges; of which one bears the Chinese name of *Thsin-ling*, or Blue Mountains, and stretches to the south-east, between the parallels of 31° and 34°, and the other, known under the name of *Nan-ling*, Mountains of the South, east-south-east, between the parallels of 24° and 27°. The mountains of Thsin-ling and Nan-ling, marked in most of the maps of China as continuous chains, are in reality only mountain masses, of which the general direction is towards the north-east. The Chinese soil presents also several other great broken chains, formed of separate groups, tending in the same direction. Such are those which extend from the eastern point of Chan-tong, in the island of Hai-nan, and from *Thai-tong*, near the province of Chan-si, in the north, to the frontiers of Tonquin. This general direction from south-west to north-east is also that of the line of volcanoes, which is continued across the great island of Formosa, the Archipelago of *Lieou-tchieou* and Japan, as far as the Aleutian Islands. The learned geologist M. Elie de Beaumont has shown that it coincides with the great circle of the terrestrial sphere which passes by the Cordilleras of South America and the Rocky Mountains of the North; whence it seems we may infer that the mountain system of Oriental Asia, and that of the great American chains, are of the same date. The earthquakes, the mud eruptions, the upheavings of the soil, which have been observed in China from the remotest antiquity, have, in fact, a striking analogy with phenomena of the same kind that have taken place in the two Americas. There is no volcano now in action in China, but it is certain that over a great extent of country the soil is volcanic; and in the province of Chan-si there are many volcanic vents, emitting sulphurous compounds,—Solfataras, as

they are called,—which are turned to economical uses by the inhabitants.

Parallel to these series of mountain groups in China, flow a great number of streams, which mostly fall into one or other of the immense rivers,— *Yang-tse-kiang,* that we have called the Blue River, and the *Hoang-ho,* or Yellow River. Both take their rise in the eastern mountains of Thibet, between 34° and 35° of north latitude. Their mouths also are at no great distance from one another; but during their course they leave between them a prodigious tract of country, of which we have already spoken elsewhere. As the Chinese geographers class the mountains according to their own ideas, and distinguish five principal ones, whose positions they describe mostly according to historical tradition, so also they mention four rivers, under the name of *Sse-tou,* "The Four Flowings;" namely, the *Kiang,* the *Ho,* the *Houi,* and the *Tsi.* To these must be added a considerable number of rivers that fall into the sea, but which do not equal, either in length or volume, the tributaries of the Yellow and Blue Rivers.

There are in China several great lakes, amongst which are distinguished five principal ones; namely, the Lake *Thoung-thing,* on the confines of *Hou-nan* and *Hou-pé;* secondly, the Lake *Phou-yong,* in the province of *Kiang-si;* thirdly, Lake *Houng-tse* in *Kiang-sou;* fourthly, the *Si-hou,* or Western Lake, in *Tche-kiang;* and fifthly, Lake *Tai-hou,* or the Great Lake, on the borders of Kiang-sou and Tche-kiang. There are also other smaller and less celebrated lakes, principally in Yun-nan.

The climate of a country that extends from the tropic to 56° of latitude, must of course differ excessively in the different provinces; and it does in fact present every variety of the temperate, and some also of both the frigid and torrid zones. The province of the Black River has winters like those of Siberia, and the heat of Canton is equal to that of Hindostan. You see reindeer in the north and elephants in the south.

Between these two extremes is found every variation of temperature and climate. Thus, at Pekin, in latitude 40°, the thermometer falls during the three winter months to 30° below zero, and rises in summer to 30° of heat. At Canton, lat. 23°, the mean temperature is 22°9′. The air in China is mostly very salubrious, which is the more remarkable, as the most general cultivation, at least all over the southern parts, is that of rice. This advantage may no doubt be partly attributed to the happy arrangement of the great basins being open to the most healthy winds, but also partly to the wise measures adopted for the improvement of the country in the culti-

vation of the banks of the lakes and marshy lands, procuring a free passage for the waters of rivers and streams, and subjecting to judicious management the work of irrigation, which so materially concerns the prosperity of the Empire and the welfare of the inhabitants.

The entire surface of China may be divided into three zones, parallel to the equator, and of which the temperature and products are very different. The northern zone extends to the 35th parallel, and does not pass to the south beyond the lower valley of the Yellow River. The climate here is much too severe for tea, rice, or the common mulberry; the land is mostly sown with millet and barley, which resist the cold better than wheat. A great many iron ores, and considerable beds of coal, are also found here. This precious combustible is indeed found almost all over China; and especially in the province of Kan-sou. It is employed for the common fuel, as well as in the manufacture of iron, lime, &c. The central zone, bounded by the 27th or 26th parallel, and the mountains of Nan-ling, has much milder winters than the northern, and the rice and wheat are excellent there. It possesses, too, the better kinds of tea: the mulberry, the cotton tree, the jujube, the orange tree, the sugar cane, which was imported from India in the eighth century, and the bamboo, which is found, indeed, as far as lat. 38°, and which has been applied by the Chinese to a great variety of purposes. The eastern part of this favoured zone is celebrated for its manufactures of silk and cotton; the middle of it passes for the granary of China, and might feed the whole country from its enormous harvests of rice; the west is rich in woods fit for building. The southern zone, bordered by the sea, has the same natural productions as these, but not generally of as good a quality, as the temperature is much higher. Numerous metalliferous deposits are distributed throughout both zones: gold and silver in the provinces of the south and west; copper, tin, and lead, in the central province of Kiang-si; and mercury in abundance in various forms. Finally, the mountains of the south-west, in Yan-nan and Kouei-tcheou, are said to be rich in metals of all kinds. There are also found in China the lapis lazuli, the ruby, the emerald, the corindum*, quartz; ollaris stone, of which vases, and especially inkstands, are made; steatite, various kinds of schist, jasper, and serpentine, used in the fabrication of musical instruments; and the precious green stone called jade, and by the Chinese, who set a high value on it, *Yu*.

* A precious stone, of which there are many varieties, and which is said to be the hardest after the diamond. — TRANS.

It is found in Thai-tong, in the province of Chan-si, but most of these stones come from Khootan, and are brought from Tartary by the Bucharians.

China has a great number of native animals, amongst which are several that are little, or not at all known in Europe. Horses are small, and not so valuable as in some other countries. In the north are found the camel of Bactriana, the buffalo, various kinds of bears, the badger, the rat, a particular kind of tiger, and several species of the leopard and panther.

The ox is less common than in Europe, and the pig is smaller than the European. There are several species of dogs with black tongues. The cat is domesticated, especially a tailless kind, very common in the south; and the white variety, with silky hair, is not unknown.

There are several species of *rodentia*, some of which, indeed, swarm so as to become a perfect scourge, and traverse the country in immense troops. The jerboa, the flying-squirrel, the otter, the sable are found in the forests, and the rhinoceros and the oriental tapir inhabit the western parts of Kouang-si, Yan-nan and Sse-tchouen. Many kinds of stags, goats, and antelopes, the musk-deer, and other less known ruminants, people the forests and mountains, particularly in the western provinces. In the south-west are also found many of the *quadrumana*, and even some large kinds of monkeys, nearly related to the *ourang-outang*.

China, so fertile in all sorts of natural productions, also possesses a treasure without which the most abundant riches of the soil become useless; namely, the industry of its inhabitants. In all that concerns the material conveniences of life, the industry of the Chinese is marvellous. The origin of various arts among them is lost in the darkness of ages; but their invention is attributed to two personages, whose historical existence has often been doubted by the annalists.

Since time immemorial the Chinese have known how to manufacture the silk stuffs that have attracted towards them the merchants of the greater part of Asia. The manufacture of porcelain has been brought to a degree of perfection that has been only very lately surpassed in Europe, and which has not yet been equalled for solidity and cheapness. The bamboo serves for the fabrication of thousands of articles; their cottons and nankeens are renowned all the world over; they excel in making flowered satins, in which, notwithstanding the simplicity of their means, they succeed in producing the most varied designs; their crapes we have not yet been able to imitate. Besides their hempen

cloths, they make a very strong kind with a sort of ivy called *ko*. Their furniture, their vases, their instruments and tools of every kind, are remarkable for a certain ingenious simplicity well deserving of imitation.

The polarity of the loadstone had been remarked among them 2500 years before our era, although no result favourable to navigation had been obtained from it. Gunpowder, and other inflammable substances, which they make use of for fireworks of a very effective kind, were known to them from a remote period ; and it is believed that the bombs and swivel guns, of which they taught the use to the Tartars in the 13th century, may have given the idea of artillery to the Europeans, although the form of the guns and cannon made use of at present was brought to them from France, as the names given to them attest. In all recorded time they have known how to work in metals, make musical instruments, and cut and polish hard stones. Wood engraving and stereotype-printing date in China from the middle of the 10th century ; and they excel in dyeing, embroidery and lacquered work. Very imperfect imitations are produced in Europe of some of the productions of their industry—their lively and unchangeable colours, their fine and strong paper, their ink, and many other articles, the manufacture of which requires patience, care, and dexterity. They are fond of imitating models that come to them from foreign countries, and they copy them with the most exact and servile fidelity. They even make expressly for the Europeans articles adapted to their taste ; and images in china, steatite, or painted wood, are made so cheaply among them, that there might often be economy in getting them from China, as they could only be executed by European workmen at great expense.

We may observe, however, that manufacturing industry, like everything else in China, is in a state of decay, and visibly declining from day to day. Many important secrets connected with it are lost, and the most skilful workmen would now be incapable of producing the perfection and finish so much admired in the works of past ages. Thence arises the immoderate passion of the rich Chinese for antiques—*kou-toon*, as they call them. They seek with avidity for the silks, bronzes, porcelain, and paintings of ancient date, which certainly far surpass more modern productions ; but not only do the Chinese of the present day invent nothing and improve nothing, they retrograde perceptibly from the point attained a long time ago.

This deplorable state of things is referable to the general disorganisation and the carelessness of government, which we have

had occasion to mention so often. No one cares to offer any encouragement to the talents and merit of artists or artisans; there is nothing to excite any emulation among them; and consequently no one endeavours to make any progress, or to distinguish himself above his fellows. Every man of genius capable of giving a salutary impulse to art and industry, is paralysed by the thought that his efforts will remain entirely unknown, and are indeed of the two more likely to bring him punishment than reward from the government. It was not thus formerly, and the means now employed in Europe, which contribute so powerfully to develope all industrial capacities and talents, were once in use in the Chinese Empire. There were public exhibitions for the productions of the fine and useful arts; all citizens were admitted to examine them; and the magistrates never failed to praise and reward those who distinguished themselves by their diligence and success.

In the accounts of the voyages made by the Arabs in China in the 9th century, there is a curious passage, which serves in some measure to explain the astonishing progress made by the Chinese, at an epoch when the other nations of the world were plunged in ignorance and barbarism.

"The Chinese," says the Arab narrator, "are, of all the creatures of God, those who have most skill in the hand in all that concerns the arts of design and fabrication, and for every kind of work; they are not in this respect surpassed by any nation. In China, when a man has made anything that probably no one else would be able to make, he carries it to the governor, demanding a recompense for the progress he has made in the art. The governor immediately orders the article to be placed at the door of his palace, and keeps it there for a year: if in the course of that time no one finds any fault in it, he rewards the artist, and takes him into his service; but if any real defect can be pointed out in the work, it is sent back, and no reward given to the maker.

"One day, a young man brought a piece of silk stuff, on which was represented an ear of corn, with a sparrow perching on it. No one on seeing it could doubt that it was a real ear of corn, and that a sparrow was really sitting upon it. The stuff remained for some time in the place of exhibition; at last a humpbacked man came, and began to criticise the performance. He was immediately admitted to the governor of the town, and the artist at the same time was sent for. Then they asked the humpbacked caviller what he had to object to; and he said, 'Everybody knows very well that a sparrow could not perch upon an ear of corn without making it bend; now the artist has represented it quite straight,

and yet he has shown a sparrow perched upon it.' The observation was considered just, and the artist received no reward.

"The purpose of the Chinese in all this is to exercise the talents of the artists, and to force them to reflect maturely upon what they undertake, and devote the utmost possible care to the works that issue from their hands."

It is easy to understand how these permanent exhibitions must excite emulation, and favour the progress of the arts. Thus at this epoch, China had acquired such a marked superiority over all the neighbouring countries in this respect, that its internal trade obtained an astonishing development. The principal commerce carried on with the Romans was for silk, which was effected by the intervention of the Bucharians, the Persians, and others; it is this which first made China known in the West, and called the Westerns to China. The foreigners who frequented its ports were so numerous, that towards the end of the 9th century 120,000 of them were massacred at one time at Han-tcheou-fou, the capital of Tché-kiang. These are the terms in which the Arab writer describes these terrible executions:—

"Events have happened that have put a stop to the expeditions directed against these countries, which have ruined this land (China), and destroyed its power. I am going, please God, to relate what I have read relative to these events. That which has deprived China of the high position she previously held with respect to laws and justice, and which has interrupted the commercial expeditions towards these regions from the port of Syraf, is the enterprise of a rebel, who did not belong to the royal house, and who was called Bauschena. This man began by crafty and disobedient behaviour; then he took arms and began to pillage private persons. Little by little bad men collected round him; his name became terrible; his resources increased; his ambition took a higher flight; and among the towns of China that he attacked was Khan-fou, the port where the Arab merchants land. Between this town and the sea there is a distance of some days' journey; its situation is on a great river, and it is bathed by fresh water.*

"The inhabitants of Khan-fou having closed their gates, the rebels besieged them a long time. That took place in the course of the year 264 of the Hegira (878 A.D.). The town was taken

* This description is perfectly accurate. We have been on the spot where *Khan-fou* formerly stood; the port exists no longer, being filled up with sand, but the Chinese of the neighbourhood have preserved the memory of its commercial importance.

at last, and all the inhabitants put to the sword. Persons acquainted with the events that happen in China, report that there perished on this occasion 120,000 Mussulmans, Jews, Christians, and Magi, who were established in the town, and carried on trade there, without counting the natives killed at the same time. The precise number of persons of these four religions who lost their lives was known, because the Chinese Governor was in the habit of levying a tax upon them according to their numbers. The rebels also had the mulberry and other trees cut down, which were upon the territory of the town. We name the mulberry trees in particular, because the leaf of this tree feeds the insect that makes the silk, up to the moment when the creature constructs its last dwelling. This circumstance was the cause of no more silk being sent from there to the Arab countries, and other regions."

Whilst foreigners flocked to the ports of the Celestial Empire, Chinese merchants visited in their junks all the seas of India, and went to traffic in Arabia and Egypt. They visit even yet, for commercial purposes, the islands of the Eastern Archipelago, the ports of Cochin China and Japan, the peninsula of Malacca, and even Bengal. As to land trade, they have at different times occupied themselves with it in a very active manner; and it cannot be doubted that it is the interests of commerce that have carried to Tartary the Chinese colonies established there, and also drawn thither the armies sent to the Western countries by the Chinese government.

At present there is an active foreign trade carried on along all the northern and western frontier. The Chinese get horses from Tartary, as well as the precious green stone called jade; musk and shawls from Thibet; furs from Siberia; soaps, leather, and gold and silver thread from Silesia and Russia. The neighbouring towns of the Birmah country get their European goods this way; and it was by the route of Little Bucharia, and the towns on the north west of Kan-sou, that the first silks formerly arrived in Europe; but the difficulties of transport have now for some time rendered the foreign commerce by land far less important than by sea.

The port of Canton was for a long time the only one open to European commerce, which, up to the end of the 18th century, sent nothing to China but its money to exchange for tea. Since the commencement of the 19th, it has sent also cotton goods, woollen cloth, wrought metals, watches, &c. India furnishes her spices, camphor, ivory, and especially enormous quantities of

opium, the taste for which has been so rapidly propagated in China.

This vast continent yields to foreign commerce the value of about 7,000,000*l.* in exchange for above 9,000,000*l.* of raw or manufactured products sent to her from India and the west. The more or less considerable consumption of the principal products of China, tea and raw silk, determines the importance of the exchanges that can be effected with the subjects of the Celestial Empire. China needs to sell, not to buy. With the exception of opium and Indian cotton, she accepts foreign goods only with the view of favouring her own export trade. According to these data, it would be easy to foresee the commercial opportunities that France might obtain for herself on this new ground, by the side of the other powers of Europe. England imports into her marts 54,000,000 pounds of tea; the United States, 17,000,000; Russia, above 8,000,000: as to France, she only takes the tea required for her own consumption, and that is less than 600,000 pounds. Raw silk is only taken by England and the United States, — England more than 2,000,000 pounds, representing a value of 1,400,000*l.* Of all the countries that seek an opening for their goods in China, British India is the only one that finds an easy market, and which can turn the balance of exchange in its own favour. China receives annually from Calcutta and Bombay to the amount of 1,200,000*l.* in raw cotton, and above 5,000,000*l.* in opium. British manufactured goods, by being sold at a very low price, have, notwithstanding the competition of Chinese industry, been introduced into the ports of Canton and *Shang-hai*, to the amount of 1,320,000*l.* in cottons, and 440,000*l.* in woollen cloths.

The Russian cloths offered at Kiaktha and in Central Asia, and the American cottons brought to Shang-hai, accept the same conditions and submit to the same sacrifices. This burdensome commerce is maintained by means of the profits realised on the return cargoes, and it also excludes from the extreme East the productions of France. Thus in the best years the exchanges of France with China have not exceeded a value of 2,000,000 of francs.*

In order to afford the means of estimating at a glance the relative importance of the commercial transactions of foreign nations with China, we will give an exact statement of the number of vessels belonging to each which entered its port during one year.

* Revue des deux Mondes, 1st Sept. 1841, by M. Jurien de la Gravière, whose numerous and interesting works afford a proof that it is possible to be at the same time a distinguished sailor and a highly gifted writer.

FOREIGN VESSELS WHICH ENTERED CHINESE PORTS IN 1850.

England	374
United States	183
Holland	29
Spain	13
Various nations	22
France	4

This commerce is doubtless of considerable importance to England and the United States, but its influence is very little felt in this vast Chinese Empire, and this immense population of traders. The trade with foreigners might cease suddenly and completely, without causing any sensation in the interior provinces The great Chinese merchants in the ports open to the Europeans would doubtless feel it; but it is probable that the Chinese nation would not experience the least inconvenience. The price of tea and silk would fall, and that of opium would rise, but only for a short time, for the Chinese would soon raise it in abundance. The course of business would suffer no embarrassment, since, as M. Jurien de la Gravière truly observes, "China has need to sell and not to buy." Its rich and fertile provinces furnish all that it requires; it has within its own limits all that is either necessary or useful, and Europe can only supply it with articles of luxury and fancy. The cotton goods brought to China, enormous as their amount appears, can be in reality but a feeble resource for the immense consumption of more than 300,000,000 of men.

If, then, the Chinese Government has never, at any time, favoured foreign commerce; if it has even endeavoured to paralyse and crush it; it was because it has always considered it as prejudicial to the true interests of the country. Commerce, according to the Chinese, can only be serviceable to the Empire insomuch as by giving up superfluous articles, it acquires what are necessary and useful. This principle being admitted, they infer from it, that as the trade with foreigners diminishes the quantity of silk, tea, and porcelain, and consequently increases the price of these articles in all the provinces, it is really disadvantageous to the Empire, and it is for this reason they have always endeavoured to fetter it. The various objects of luxury, the precious trifles brought by European ships, have never created any illusion on this subject for the Government, and it has desired only the commerce with the Tartars and Russians, by which it obtains the furs and leather that it really requires, and always in the way of barter.

The Chinese have by no means the same ideas as the Europeans on the subject of commerce. Kouan-tse, a celebrated economist of the Celestial Empire, who lived more than two thousand years ago, expresses himself thus: "The money which enters a kingdom by commerce only enriches it in the same proportion as that which goes out. There is no commerce permanently advantageous but the exchange of things useful and necessary. The trade in articles of pomp, elegance, or curiosity, whether carried on by exchange or by money payments, supposes the existence of luxury; now luxury, which is the abundance of what is superfluous among certain citizens, supposes the want of necessaries among others. The more horses the rich put to their chariots, the more people will have to walk on foot; the more their houses are vast and magnificent, the more those of the poor are small and miserable; the more their tables are covered with dainties, the more people there are reduced to eat only rice.

"The best that can be done for men in a social state by means of industry and labour is that all should have the necessaries, and some the conveniences of life."

As these are the principles of the Chinese Government, it is easy to see that European productions will never have a very extensive market in China; at all events as long as the Chinese remain what they are without any considerable modification in their tastes and habits. As foreign commerce cannot offer them any article of primary necessity, nor even of any real utility, they will interest themselves very little in its extension, and they would see it stopped altogether, not only without uneasiness, but with a certain feeling of satisfaction.

The case would certainly not be the same in England; a total interruption of the trade with China would be for her a most disastrous event. The life and movement of that colossal power would be immediately paralysed in India; from the extremities the evil would rapidly reach the heart, and before long there would be seen, even in the metropolis, symptoms of a mortal malady. Her possessions in India are the most fertile source of the wealth and power of Great Britain, and these possessions are nourished by China. The English are perfectly aware of this, and that is why they have in these latter years bravely taken the resolution to endure all the offences of the Chinese Government, rather than by coming to a new rupture with it to arrest the great commercial movement which is one of the principal sources of the prosperity of India.

One excellent reason why the Chinese care little about foreign

commerce is, that their internal trade is so extensive, and employs vessels of all sizes, which are continually furrowing the rivers and canals by which the Empire is watered throughout its whole extent. This trade consists principally in the exchange of the grain, salt, metal, and other natural and artificial productions of the various provinces.

China is a country so vast, so rich, so varied, that its internal trade alone would suffice abundantly to occupy that part of the nation which can be devoted to mercantile operations. There are in all the great towns important commercial establishments, into which, as into reservoirs, the merchandise of all the provinces discharges itself. To these vast storehouses people flock from all parts of the Empire, and there is a constant bustle going on about them — a feverish activity that would scarcely be seen in the most important cities of Europe. The channels of communication, although often very inconvenient, are at all times thronged with merchandise, which is carried in boats, on carts, barrows, and the backs of men and of beasts of burden.

The Government itself carries on trade, by laying up in store in the granaries that are found in many of the chief towns the excess of corn that it receives in tribute, and selling it to its subjects in times of scarcity. A part of the pawnbroking establishments, so numerous in China, also belong to the Government. The rate of interest is two per cent. per month for articles of clothing, and three per cent. for jewels and articles of the metallic kind. The legal interest of money has been fixed at 30 per cent. per annum, which makes three per cent. per month, as the sixth, the twelfth, and the intercalary moon (when there is one) do not bear interest.

One would like to know what object the Chinese Government had in view, in fixing the interest of money at so enormous a rate, and to understand their mode of regarding questions of political and social economy. According to Tchao-yng, a distinguished writer of the Celestial Empire, the purpose was to prevent the value of land from increasing, and that of money from diminishing by the mediocrity of interest. In fixing it at a very high rate, it has endeavoured to render the distribution of land proportioned to the number of families, and the circulation of money more active and uniform.

"It is evident," he says, "that money being inferior to land, as being more casual in itself, and in the income derived from it, the same value in land will always be preferred to that which is in

money. It is evident, also, that in order not to run the risks to which money is liable, people will like even to possess a smaller value in land, with greater security. This smaller value is proportioned to the risks of money and its profits.

"The more the interest of money is raised, the more land is required, all risks being compensated, to equal it, as you must have a greater number of acres of bad land to equal a smaller of that which is good and fertile. Now the more land is required to equal money, the easier is it for the poor citizens to preserve what land they have, and even to acquire a certain quantity; since it is not needful for that to be rich; and for the same reason the divisions are easy in families, and advantageous to the state for the lands which the Government has had especially in view. Why? Because property in land produces always more to those who cultivate it themselves, and that the rich, who possess more than they can cultivate, lose for the state in neglecting their lands, or making them over to others, what those gain who are their own cultivators—a certain and inevitable loss, to which must also be added the risks of the harvest and the casualties of payment; a loss, consequently, which, being aggravated by these risks, renders the purchase of land less advantageous to them than to the poor, and must facilitate it to the latter in the same proportion that it disgusts the former."

After having shown by examples that the landed possessions of the people have always increased in proportion as the interest of money was high, Tchao-yng concludes thus:—"The great advantage which the law of interest at thirty per cent. has aimed at and obtained is, that the cultivators of land, who are the most numerous, the most useful, the most moral and laborious portion of the community, may possess property in land, and have enough to subsist upon without being rich, and not be the unfortunate slaves of the monied interest, of those citizens who fatten their useless idleness on the fruit of the labour of these unfortunate men."

Tchao-yng endeavours afterwards to prove that the rate of thirty per cent. being the mean between the revenue of good land and the profits of wholesale trade, was precisely what was needed to stimulate commerce, and bring idle money into circulation. "Whoever has good lands," he says, "will not leave them to lie fallow, because, if he be not insane, he will not deprive himself in dead loss of the harvests with which every year they may fill his granaries. Whoever has property or money would be equally insane if he allowed it to lie idle in his coffers; since, if there is

more risk in placing it than in cultivating land, there is also more considerable profit.

"Everybody agrees that a merchant never keeps money locked up in his chest, since the powerful attraction of gain continually draws it out. The law of thirty per cent. being established, the same attraction must produce the same effect upon all those who have it. We see, therefore, that since money has borne this high interest, no one thinks of hoarding it, and the circulation of it has been more general, lively, and continual."

Another economist, named Tsien-tche, maintains that the legal interest of thirty per cent. is intended to facilitate commerce. It will be seen that the Chinese are as advanced as we are in the art of making formulas.

"A well-organised society," says Tsien-tche, "would be that in which every one labouring according to his powers, his talents, and the public necessities, all property would be divided in such proportions as should secure its enjoyment to every one at the same time.

"The richest state would be that in which a small amount of labour would furnish the productions of nature and art in abundance superior to the numbers and the wants of the inhabitants. Wealth has necessarily a relation to wants. The Empire was richer, with a smaller amount of property, under the first dynasties, because less labour produced more in proportion to the number of the inhabitants."

"The population of the Empire is such at present that the pressing interest of common necessity requires us to draw all that can be drawn from the fertility of the land and the industry of man. In order to effect this, we must cultivate in every place what best flourishes in it, and work up all the materials we have. The superabundant produce of some localities may then become a help to others that are deficient, and it is for commerce to undertake their transport.

"The necessity of commerce in the Empire is equal to the necessity of exchanges, and the utility of commerce to their utility —that is to say, the necessity is absolute, and the utility universal and continual.

"We must distinguish in commerce things and places. Its totality embraces the productions of nature and art—the necessary, the useful, the convenient, the agreeable, and the superfluous.

"There is a commerce between family and family in the same place, a commerce from village to village, from town to town, from province to province; and it is easy, continual, and universal, on

account of proximity; a commerce, finally, of the capital with the provinces, and of the provinces among themselves, however distant they may be from one another."

"If all the goods of the Empire belonged to the State, and that the State would undertake the distribution of them, it must necessarily undertake these exchanges which are effected by commerce, by carrying the superabundance of one place to another; and in that case, it would have to assign a salary to those who should undertake this duty, as it does to magistrates and soldiers, &c., and this office, which has nothing in it but what is noble and great, since it stands in direct relation with the public felicity, would become honourable. Merchants, however, undertake to render this important service to society at their own risk and peril. The proportion, and the correspondence of the exchanges of productions, is neither uniform, constant, nor convenient enough to provide for the varied and continual wants of society; but money, as the sign and equivalent of a fixed and recognised value, supplies this want so much the more easily, as it lends itself with facility and promptitude to all the proportions, divisions, and correspondences of exchange. Money is the spring and the leaven of commerce, and commerce can only be flourishing inasmuch as the circulation of money facilitates, increases, accelerates, and perpetuates the multitude of exchanges.

"The ancient equilibrium and proportional distribution of property having been destroyed, it is evident that there are a great number of citizens whose expenses are less than their receipts, and who, consequently, can put by money, or at least are in no hurry to make use of it. It is not less evident to the Government, watchful that the totality of money circulating in the Empire should be proportioned to the value and quantity of the innumerable exchanges of commerce, that the money withdrawn from circulation by these reserves diminishes the facility, the uniformity, and the continuity of these exchanges in proportion to its quantity. Everything, therefore, which tends to restore it to circulation, and to keep it there, is for the benefit of commerce.

"The law does what it can, by forcing those to whom the State gives most, to be at the greatest expense; custom and propriety do so still more, but that is not sufficient. The high interest of money, however, supplies this want, by securing the profits which tempt cupidity. If there are any that resist so powerful an attraction, it is a new proof that a smaller interest would have still less drawn it out, and would have deprived commerce of just so much advantage.

"As the need of money in commerce is always pressing and universal, on account of its immensity and its infinite divisions and ramifications, the smallest sums find a place in it, and are enticed by the temptation of profit—a temptation so much the more powerful to the labourer and the artisan, that the smallest loss affects his well-being, and that if he entrusts his money to commerce, he may withdraw it when he will.

"Merchants and traders, if they had sufficient funds to do without the help of loans, which is impossible on account of the inequality of fortunes, and of the proportion of the money in circulation with the value of exchanges throughout the Empire—could merchants and traders, I say, do without the continual assistance of loans—it would be in the interest of commerce that they should make them, and that they should be rendered lucrative in order to interest the public in its success.

"If the facility, the convenience, and the safety of transports by land and water are carefully watched over; if everything relating to commerce in sales, purchases, and the despatch of goods, is effected with so much celerity and good faith; if the privileges of fairs and markets are so scrupulously preserved; if the police kept there is so attentive and so mild; if the malversations and tyrannies of custom-house officers are punished with so much energy, it is because almost every one has property engaged in commerce, or is interested for those who have. Government must demand the assistance which is its due, and which it is so important to all the citizens to procure for it; and the high interest of money is an infallible method of effecting this. This law of thirty per cent. was a grand *coup d'état*."

The economist Tsien-tche afterwards refutes the adversaries of the law of thirty per cent., one of whom, Leang-tsien, says, "The ancients tolerated only a low rate of interest; that of thirty per cent. is an injustice and a public oppression. It is impossible to imagine more flagrant usury." We might content ourselves with replying, first, that the fact alleged is at least doubtful, since we cannot open the ancient authors, or even the sacred books, without perceiving that the profits of trade were prodigious under the beautiful and celebrated dynasty of the Tcheou; and it is not natural to suppose either that merchants always traded with their own funds, or that those who lent to them did not desire to share the profits made with their own money; all that one can say is, that a high rate of interest was not authorised by law; but as we do not find that it was prohibited, it would be necessary to inquire whether what we

have lost of those laws contained the condemnation or the apology of high interest.

"Secondly, we may reply that the proportions have all been changed with the increase of the population. A father may be obliged to govern his family differently when he has twelve children to what he did when he had only three or four. Thirdly, that it is terrible to accuse of injustice and usurious oppression a law that zeal for the public good alone has dictated,—which has been received with thanks throughout the Empire, which is equally for the profit of all, and as it only *permits*, not enjoins, this rate, is no restraint on any one,—which is now several centuries old, and which replies to all objections by the present state of the Empire and of commerce."

"A shop on the great street that runs towards the first entrance of the Imperial Palace lets for four times as much as it would let for if it were in a more ordinary and less frequented quarter. What is the reason of this augmentation of rent? Why should this disproportion exist between two houses whose real value is the same, since they have cost the same sum to build? It is because, although it only depends on myself, if I am the owner, to profit by its advantageous commercial position, I yield my right to the merchant on condition that he shall make me amends, by increasing the rent in proportion to the profit it will procure for him, and which I have given up to him. The case is the same with the money lent to merchants.

"Commerce has its revolutions, its accidents, its faults, its losses, its failures in good faith; of which the general result reduces the sum total of the property embarked in it to an interest that does not exceed by more than four or five per cent. the ordinary return from good land. Is that too much advantage to secure for it the loans it requires, and compensate those who embark their money in it for the risks they run? The public at large always gains in the loans made to commerce, but there are many individuals who lose their interest, or even their capital. The flux and reflux of the loss and gain must necessarily be taken into the account in the rate of interest of money, and so much the more that, whether by reason of the population, or of the constitution of the government, and of the public administration, the greater part of the funds engaged in commerce must be borrowed."

"The State has laid no other tax on commerce than that of the customs; the merchant and the trader, however rich they may be, whatever expense the State may go to to secure the facility and convenience of their trade, give nothing in return, although they

gather its best fruits. This policy is wise and equitable, for as the merchant and trader derive their revenues from the public by the profits of their trade, they would make the consumers pay any tax that might be demanded of them; the State would therefore, in that case, only have made them receivers of taxes. If, however, the necessities of the State should require the imposition of a tax on commodities the consumption of which is common to all classes, and in proportion to the fortunes of individuals, it is evident that it should be a tax of which the distribution should be most equitable, and least burdensome to the poor. Every one would admit this. Our literary men, who have cried out against the interest of thirty per cent., understand nothing of political administrations. Let us change the names, and this will be demonstrated. To what does the excess of interest obtained at present over the whole Empire amount beyond what was obtained under the dynasty of Tang, nine centuries ago? Let us take it at ten millions of ounces of silver. Who would object, if the State should demand such a sum as this, over and above the ordinary imposts, for the purpose of providing for the interests of commerce in the interior of the Empire? Well, the decree authorising a rate of thirty per cent. interest for money, has created such a tax, and the State yields it to those who lend their money to their fellow-citizens for the purposes of commerce. It is on the profits of trade, and not on the public at large, that this tax is levied, and in the most advantageous manner, since every one pays it in proportion to his consumption. All that there is peculiar in this impost is, that the State yields it to the public, without making it pass through the treasury of the Empire, and without being obliged to increase it by the expenses of collection.

"How is it that the high rate of interest fixed by the law affords advantage to commerce? Because it opens a career to those who have the talent for it, and favours its division among a greater number. The genius for commerce is a peculiar one, like that for letters, for government, for the arts; possibly even one might say that, in some respects, it embraces them all. Now this genius for commerce is lost to the Empire in all those who follow a different career; it remains therefore to develope it in those who have no other resource. Although commerce is indisputably necessary to the State, yet the administration which goes to so much expense to facilitate study, and to form by that means men capable of political business, does nothing for those who have a genius for commerce to assist them in its development. Now the high

interest of money makes amends for this kind of neglect. However poor a young man may be, if he is well conducted and clever, he will be able to borrow enough to make an attempt; and as soon as this succeeds, all purses will be open to him, and this interest law will have given to the Empire a useful citizen, who would have been lost if a helping hand had not been held out to him. Now, when men can enter into business without having any money of their own, commerce must necessarily be divided among a great number, and that is what the present state of the population renders desirable.

"A man, whatever he may be, has but a certain amount of time and strength to employ. If his business demands more, he must call in help, that is to say, he must buy the services of others; they cost him little, for the most part, and he endeavours to obtain the utmost advantage from them. What he gains by these assistants, by degrees releases him from the necessity of working himself, and the public is charged with the burden of his idleness. It was asked by So-ling why he had lent twenty thousand ounces of silver from the public treasury to twelve small traders. 'It was,' he replied, 'in order that the public might not any more have to pay for the lacquered work, the shows, the festivals, concubines, and slaves of him who has monopolised the silk factories. Rivalry in trade obliges traders to emulate each other in labour and industry; that is to say, to be less extortionate towards the public.' "

It would be, we presume, superfluous to warn the reader, that in quoting these passages, perhaps at rather too great length, we by no means intended to express our assent to all the doctrines of the Chinese economists. Many of these perplexed questions are too far above our knowledge on such subjects for us to pretend to offer any opinion on them. We wished merely to show the mode of thinking of the Chinese writers. It is so common for people in Europe to form their opinions of the Chinese from the drawings on screens and fans, and to regard them merely as more or less civilised baboons, that we were glad to have an opportunity of showing how they treat questions of policy and social economy.

In order to facilitate commercial operations, the Chinese have invented pecuniary societies, which are found over the whole Empire, the object of which is to avoid the burden of fixed debts bearing interest. The members of these societies agree among themselves upon a certain sum to be contributed by each on the first of every month; on this same day lots are drawn for the whole sum, and so on every month till every one has had his turn. As this would, however, be rather unfair towards the last comers, the

sum is increased every month by a small interest paid by the first winners. The advantage of these societies consists in obtaining a considerable sum at once for small ones paid at intervals. As the Government does not interfere with them in any way whatever, their rules vary at the pleasure of the members; but there are two conditions that appear to be invariable — namely, that the founder of the society has a first lot, and that a member who once fails to pay his contribution forfeits his advances to the chief, who is answerable for all; but this is a case of very rare occurrence. All the members make it a great point of honour to be faithful to these engagements and a failure in them is sure to cover a man with the contempt of his fellow-citizens. If any one finds himself pressed for money, he easily obtains the advantage of having the next lot given to him; and if he cannot go on any longer, he yields his advances to another, who becomes answerable for him. These societies are so much the fashion, that almost all the Chinese belong to one or other; farmers, artisans, small tradesmen, are thus all collected in groups, and hold their resources in common. A Chinese never lives in isolation, but it is especially in matters of interest and commerce that his associative spirit is remarkable.

The immense population of China, the richness of its soil, the variety of its products, the vast extent of its territory, and the facility of communication by land and water, the activity of its inhabitants, its laws and public usages, all unite to render this nation the most commercial in the world.

On whichever side a stranger enters China, whatever point may first meet his eye, he is sure to be struck, above all else, by the prodigious bustle and movement going on everywhere under the stimulus of the thirst of gain, and the desire of traffic by which this people is incessantly tormented. From north to south, from east to west, the whole country is like a perpetual fair, and a fair that lasts the whole year without any interruption.

And yet, when one has not penetrated to the centre of the Empire, when one has not seen the great towns, Han-yang, Ou-tchang-fou, and Han-keou, facing one another, it is impossible to form an adequate idea of the amount of the internal trade.

Han-keou especially, "The Mouth of Commercial Marts," must be visited, for it is one great shop; and every production has its street or quarter particularly devoted to it. In all parts of the city you meet with a concourse of passengers, often pressed so compactly together, that you have the greatest difficulty to make your way through them. Long lines of porters stretch through every street; and, as they proceed with a peculiar gymnastic step, they utter a

measured monotonous cry, whose sharp sound is heard above all the clamours of the multitude. In the midst of this crowded vortex of men, there prevails, nevertheless, a very fair amount of order and tranquillity; there are few quarrels, much less fights, although the police is far from being as numerous as in most of our cities in Europe. The Chinese are always restrained by a salutary fear of compromising themselves that acts like an instinct; and though they are easily excited, and induced to vociferate, they are soon quiet again, and things return to their usual course.

In seeing the streets thus constantly thronged with people, you might be apt to think that all the inhabitants of the town must be out, and the houses empty. But just cast a glance into the shops, and you will see they are crowded with buyers and sellers. The factories also contain a considerable number of workmen and artisans; and if to these you add the old men, women, and children, you will not be surprised to hear the population of Han-keou, Han-yang, and Ou-tchang-fou, taken together, estimated at eight millions. We do not know whether the inhabitants of the boats are included in this calculation, but the great port of Han-keou is literally a forest of masts, and it is quite astonishing to see vessels of such a size, in such numbers, in the very middle of China.

We have said that Han-keou is in some measure the general mart for the eighteen provinces, since it is there the goods arrive, and thence depart, which are intended to supply all the internal trade. Perhaps the world could not show a town more favourably situated, and possessing a greater number of natural advantages. Placed in the very centre of the Empire, it is in some measure surrounded by the Blue River, and brought into direct communication with the provinces of the east and the west. This same river, on leaving Han-keou, describes two curves, to the right and left, and bears the great trading junks towards the south as far as the bosom of the lakes Pou-yang and Thoung-ting, which are like two inland seas. An immense number of rivers, which fall into these two lakes, receive in small boats the merchandise brought from Han-keou, and distribute it through all the provinces of the south. Towards the north the natural communications are less easy, but gigantic and ingenious labours have come to the aid of nature, in the numerous artificial canals with which the north of China is intersected, and which, by marvellous and skilful contrivances, establish a communication between all the lakes and navigable rivers of the Empire, so that you might traverse its entire extent without ever getting out of your boat.

The Annals of China show that at every period each successive dynasty has paid great attention to the canal system; but no other work is comparable to that which was executed by the Emperor Yang-ti, of the dynasty of Tsin, who ascended the throne in the year 605 of the Christian era.

In the first year of his reign he dug many new canals, and enlarged the old ones, so that vessels could pass from the Hoang-Ho to the Yang-tse-kiang, and from these great rivers to the principal smaller ones. A learned man named Siao-hoai, presented to him a plan for rendering all the rivers navigable throughout their entire course, and making them communicate, one with another, by canals of a new invention. His project was adopted and executed, and there were consequently made, remade, and repaired, more than four thousand eight hundred miles of canals. This great enterprise of course required a vast amount of labour, which was divided between the soldiers and the people. Every family was required to furnish one man, between the ages of fifteen and fifty, to whom the Government gave nothing but his food. The soldiers, who had to do the most painful part of the work, received a small increase of pay. Some of these canals were lined with freestone throughout their entire length, and during our various journeys we saw remains enough to attest the beauty of the works. That which ran from the northern to the southern court* was forty feet wide, and had on its banks plantations of elm and willow. That from the eastern to the western court was less magnificent, but also bordered with a double line of trees.

Chinese historians have branded the memory of the Emperor Yang-ti, because during his reign he never ceased to oppress the people by these *corvées*, to satisfy his own caprice, and his taste for luxury, but they acknowledged that he deserved well of the Empire for the benefits conferred by his canals on the internal trade.

The wealth of China, its system of canals, and the other causes already assigned, have doubtless contributed much to develope in the country the prodigious commercial activity that has been remarked in it at all epochs; but it must be acknowledged also that the character and genius of its inhabitants has always disposed them to traffic. The Chinese has a passionate love of lucre; he is fond of all kinds of speculation and stock-jobbing, and his mind, full of finesse and cunning, takes delight in combining and calculating the chances of a commercial operation.

* There were at this time four imperial courts.

The Chinese, *par excellence*, is a man installed behind the counter of a shop, waiting for his customers with patience and resignation, and in the intervals of their arrival pondering in his head, and casting up on his little arithmetical machine, the means of increasing his fortune. Whatever may be the nature and importance of his business, he neglects not the smallest profit; the least gain is always welcome, and he accepts it eagerly: greatest of all is his enjoyment, when, in the evening, having well closed and barricaded his shop, he can retire into some corner, and there count up religiously the number of his sapecks, and reckon the earnings of the day. The Chinese is born with this taste for traffic, which grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength. The first thing a child longs for is a sapeck; the first use that it makes of its speech and intelligence is to learn to articulate the names of coins; when his little fingers are strong enough to hold the pencil, it is with making figures that he amuses himself, and as soon as the tiny creature can speak and walk, he is capable of buying and selling. In China you need never fear sending a child to make a purchase; you may rely on it, he will not allow himself to be cheated. Even the plays to which the little Chinese are addicted are always impregnated with this mercantile spirit; they amuse themselves with keeping shop, and opening little pawnbroking establishments, and familiarise themselves thus with the jargon, the tricks, and the frauds of tradesmen. Their knowledge in all that relates to commerce is so clear and precocious, that you need not hesitate to confide to them the most important affairs, and to give them serious business of this kind to manage at an age when children are mostly occupied with their playthings.

The inhabitants of the Celestial Empire enjoy the not unmerited reputation of being very artful and knowing, and such a character will of course play a great part in mercantile affairs. Volumes might be written on the frauds, more or less ingenious and audacious, of the Chinese merchants; and the habit of trickery is so general, the fashion so universal, that no one is offended at it; it is simply a mode of showing that you are clever and *wide awake*. A tradesman is often quite proud when he can tell a story of some successful piece of knavery. It is only just to observe, however, that this want of probity and good faith is chiefly found among the petty traders; the great commercial houses are, on the contrary, most remarkable for the uprightness and integrity of their dealings, and their scrupulous fidelity to their engagements. European merchants who have had commercial transactions with

China, are unanimous in extolling the irreproachable probity of their conduct, and it is painful to add that we fear they could not always return the compliment.

The only legal coinage existing in China is a little round piece made of a mixture of copper and pewter, and called by the Chinese *tsien*, and by the Europeans sapecks. They are pierced through the middle with a square hole, in order that they may easily be passed on a thread. A string of a thousand of these pieces is equivalent usually to a Chinese ounce of silver: gold and silver are never coined in China; when employed for larger purchases than can be paid for in sapecks, they are weighed like any other commodity; sapecks are used for all small transactions, and agreements are also made in strings of sapecks.

The Chinese in the towns generally carry with them little scales for buying and selling, and weigh all the money they give or receive. Bank notes, payable to the bearer, are in use throughout the whole empire ; they are issued by the great houses of business, and accepted in all the principal towns.

The value of a sapeck is about half a French centime ; and this small coinage is an incalculable advantage to small dealings. Thanks to the sapeck, one may traffic in China on very small means. One may buy a slice of pear, a dozen of fried beans, a few melon seeds, or one walnut, or one may also drink a cup of tea, or smoke some pipes for a sapeck ; and a citizen who is not rich enough to afford himself a whole orange will often purchase a half. This extreme division of Chinese coinage has given birth to an infinity of small occupations that afford a subsistence to thousands of persons. With a capital of two hundred sapecks (ten pence English), a Chinese will not hesitate to commence some mercantile speculation. The sapeck is especially an immense resource for those who are asking alms, for a man must be poor indeed not to be able to give a beggar a sapeck.

CHAP. XV.

Attempt to see the Governor of the Province. — We force the Guard of his Palace. — The Governor of Hou-pé. — Conversation with this exalted Personage. — Good Result of the Visit. — Moving. — Courtesy of a Cook. — Adieus of Master Ting and the Sse-tchouen Escort. — The Mandarin Lieou, or the "Weeping Willow," Chief of the new Escort. — Chinese Architecture. — Towers. — Pagodas. — Fine Arts. — Religion. — Doctrine of the Literary Class. — Great Honours rendered to Confucius. — Doctors of Reason. — Life and Opinions of the Philosopher Lao-tze. — Buddhism. — Legend of Buddha. — Dogmas and moral Precepts. — Buddhists persecuted by the Brahmins. — Causes of these Persecutions — Dispersion of the Buddhists through the various Countries of Asia.

We said at the commencement of the preceding chapter that on our arrival at Ou-tchang-fou, we were confined in a narrow cell of a pagoda, where we ran considerable risk of being suffocated. We had hoped that when the high functionaries of the place had themselves seen this murderous hole, they would understand that we could not live without air, and would perhaps themselves have procured us another lodging till the day of our departure. These hopes, however, did not seem very likely to be realised. The magistrates of the capital took not the slightest notice of us; and, with the exception of some petty officials, no creature came to visit us.

This treatment was certainly rather wounding to our vanity, but we might perhaps have been able to support the trial, would they only have afforded us space to move in and air to breathe. To be forsaken by our beloved and amiable Mandarins was distressing, but it could be borne; but to be dropt into a hole and forgotten, that we could not put up with. For two days we remained in this ignominious position, and then we resolved to make a vigorous effort to get out of it, and endeavour to resume the influence we had lost by our own fault. After having put on our dress of ceremony, we sent for some palanquin bearers, and commanded them to conduct us to the governor of the province. They looked at us in a hesitating manner, but we paid them in advance, promising them at the same time something handsome on our return, and then they set off with enthusiasm.

We crossed the square where the venerable Perboyre had been strangled, and arrived at the tribunal where he had been so cruelly tortured, and where sentence of death had been pronounced against him.

We alighted from our palanquins at the entrance of the palace,

and so far our enterprise had not been very difficult. We crossed the threshold, determined to bear down all obstacles that should intervene to prevent our approach to the Governor. We had scarcely reached the middle of the courtyard before we were surrounded by a crowd of satellites and attendants, such as usually throng the avenues to the great tribunals, but their sinister hang-dog physiognomies, with which we had been long familiarised, did not alarm us much. We marched on boldly, affecting not to hear the thousand remarks that were made around us, on the subject of our yellow caps and red girdles.

At the moment when we were about to cross a hall to enter a second court, we were accosted by a little Mandarin with a gilt ball, who seemed to be acting as a sort of usher to introduce guests. He appeared quite aghast at our abrupt entrance, and placing himself in our way, he asked three times running where we were going, extending at the same time his two arms in a horizontal position, as if to bar our passage.

"We are going to his Excellency the Governor," we replied.

"His Excellency the Governor is not there. You can't see the Governor. Do the Rites permit people to push in in that way to the first magistrate of the province?" and as he spoke he stamped about and gesticulated, and with his arms extended followed every one of our movements, jumping alternately to the right and the left to prevent us from passing. We walked on, nevertheless, without saying a word, and thus forced our introducer to walk backwards. As we reached the end of the hall he turned suddenly, and threw himself upon the two leaves of the folding door, as if to shut them; but seizing him by the arm, we cried out in the most imperious tone we could muster, "Woe to you if you do not leave that door open. If you stop us for a single moment, you are a lost man."

These words inspired a salutary fear; he opened the door again, and we entered the second court, leaving the little man gazing after us in open-mouthed astonishment.

We reached the Governor's apartments without any new obstacle. In the ante-chamber were four superior Mandarins, who, when we entered, seemed to doubt whether we were not ghosts. They gazed at us and at one another without speaking a word, and as if consulting each other as to what was to be done in these unexpected circumstances. At length one of them ventured to ask who we were. "We are Frenchmen," we replied; "we have been at Pekin, thence from Pekin to Lha-ssa, in Thibet; and we wish to speak with his Excellency the Governor."

"But is his Excellency the Governor informed of your arrival at Ou-tchang-fou? Has your visit been announced to him?"

"A dispatch from the Emperor ought to have informed him of our coming to Hou-pé." We remarked that the words "dispatch from the Emperor" had an effect on the Mandarins. The speaker, after fixing upon us for a moment an inquisitive look, disappeared through a little door. We suspected that he had gone to the Governor to announce to him the curious discovery he had just made; and he was not long before he returned.

"The Governor is absent," said he, in a perfectly easy manner, just as if he had not been telling a lie; "the Governor is absent. When he returns he will send for you, if he has anything to say to you. Now go back to your lodgings."

"Who is it who desires us to go away? Who told you to say the Governor would send for us? Why do you seek to deceive us by pronouncing words contrary to the truth? The Governor is here; you have just spoken with him, and we will not go away till we have seen him." As we said this, we quietly seated ourselves on a broad divan that occupied a great part of the room. The Mandarins, astonished at our doings, made their exit altogether, and left us alone.

At Han-yang, as we have said, we had betrayed much weakness, and it was now necessary to repair this fault, if we wished to reach Canton in safety, instead of perishing in misery on the road. The benevolence of the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen could not avail us farther than Ou-tchang-fou; the Governor of Hou-pé would now have the disposal of us as far as the capital of Kiang-si, and it was absolutely necessary that we should speak with him, in order not to be abandoned entirely to the voracity of the petty Mandarins. We were left alone for a long time, so that we had full leisure to arrange the plan we intended to follow.

At length an aged attendant appeared, who after having in a manner *applied* his face to ours, in order to take a good observation of them, said, in a tremulous voice, that "His Excellency the Governor invited our illustrious persons to come to him." From this polite formula, we thought it might not be difficult to recover our position, and we immediately followed the attendant into a magnificent saloon, where, amidst a crowd of Chinese articles of luxury, we noticed a French clock and two beautiful vases of Sevres china, as well as some apparently English pictures on the walls. The rich Chinese are very fond of decorating their apartments with articles of European manufacture; not that they have any great value in their eyes as works of art, but they come from a great distance, from beyond the Western Seas, and that is enough.

In that matter, Chinese and Europeans are pretty much alike. Who does not like to have in his drawing-room some ugly figure of bronze or porcelain which he can show has really come from China?

We were engaged in admiring the Sevres vases, and noticing with feelings of gratified vanity how greatly superior they were to the porcelain from the Chinese factories, when the Governor entered. He crossed the saloon swinging his arms, and looking neither to the right nor the left; and then went and sat down near a flower-stand in a large lacquered arm-chair, the back of which was covered with red cloth embroidered with silk. We saluted him respectfully, and then waited till he should address us. This personage did not appear to possess the kindness and simplicity of the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen. He was about fifty years of age, and his thin dark face had a severe and hard expression.

"Your illustrious country," said he, "is the kingdom of France; is it long since you left it?"

"Yes; several years."

"You have doubtless some affair to communicate to me, since you have come to see me?"

"First, we wished to fulfil a duty of politeness."

"Ah! I am ashamed ——."

"Then we desired to know whether the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen had forwarded a dispatch to announce our arrival at Ou-tchang-fou."

"Certainly, it arrived a long time ago; the couriers who carry dispatches travel rapidly."

"Oh! From the manner in which we have been treated here, we thought that the dispatch had not yet arrived. The Emperor gave orders to the Viceroy Pao-hing to have us conducted to Canton with all possible respect; and during our residence at Tching-tou-fou we had reason to speak in high praise of the treatment we received from the authorities. The illustrious and venerable Pao-hing, with whom we had several interviews, paid us the greatest attention; and all along the road both great and little Mandarins have respected the orders he gave concerning us, and we have travelled in the most convenient and honourable manner."

"That is the custom of our country," said the Governor, haughtily; "strangers are well treated among us."

"It appears, however," we replied, "that this custom is not general; perhaps it depends on the Governors of the provinces. The Book of Rites is the same for the whole Empire, but it would seem to be interpreted in a different manner in Hou-pé to what it

is in Sse-tchouen. At Han-yang, on the other side of the river, we should have died of hunger if we had not had money with us to go and buy food for ourselves at an inn. Here in the capital itself, during the two days we have been here, no one has taken the slightest notice of us, and we have been shut up in a cell where we had hardly room to turn round. Did the Emperor, perhaps, give orders that we should be made to expiate at Hou-pé the good treatment we had received at Sse-tchouen?"

"What words are you speaking? The mercy of the Emperor extends over all places. Where are you lodged?"

"The Viceroy of Sse-tchouen never asked us where we were lodged; he knew, because it was he himself who assigned us our lodging. When we arrived in this city we were conducted into a narrow chamber, into which scarcely any air can penetrate, and we have been there two days without seeing any one to whom we could complain. It is probably desired that our journey should end at Ou-tchang-fou."

The Governor fairly shook in his chair with anger; he declared we were calumniating the character of his nation; his sharp voice became more and more piercing, and he began to talk with so much volubility and animation, that at last we could no longer understand what he was saying. We took good care, however, not to interrupt him, but stood before him calm and motionless, waiting till he should become more pacified and hold his tongue. When the time came, we said to him, in a very low tone, but with a certain cold and concentrated energy, "Your Excellency, we are not in the habit of pronouncing rude and injurious words; it is not right to assume bad intentions in our brethren; nevertheless, we are missionaries of the Lord of Heaven; we are Frenchmen, and we cannot forget that this town is called Ou-tchang-fou."

"What is the meaning of these words? I do not comprehend them."

"We cannot forget that one of our brothers, a missionary, a Frenchman, was strangled here at Ou-tchang-fou, twenty-three years ago; and that another of our brothers, also a missionary and a Frenchman, was put to death here, not quite six years ago."

On hearing these words the Governor changed countenance, and it was evident he was greatly agitated.

"This very day," we continued, "in coming here, we crossed the square upon which our brothers were executed. Can it then be surprising if we feel some uneasiness, if we fear that some attempt may be made upon our lives, especially when we have been lodged almost in a sepulchre?"

"I don't know what you mean; I know nothing about these affairs," replied the Governor hastily; "at the periods of which you speak I was not in the province."

"We are aware of that; the Governor who was here six years ago, as soon as he had given the order to have the French missionary strangled, was degraded by the Emperor, and condemned to perpetual exile. It was evident to the whole Empire that Heaven had avenged the innocent blood. No one, however, need answer for more than his own actions. But whose fault is it that we are now being treated in the manner we have described? We have studied the writings of the philosopher Meng-tse, and we have read in them this: 'Meng-tse one day asked the king of Leang whether he thought there was any difference between killing a man with a sword and killing him with ill-treatment, and the king of Leang replied, I do not think there is any difference.'"

The Governor appeared very much astonished to hear us quote a passage from the classical books. He endeavoured to throw a little more gentleness into his physiognomy and manners, and he thought proper to reassure us concerning the fears we had expressed for our personal safety. He said that the Mandarins had executed his orders badly, that he would have a severe inquiry into the matter, and that everybody's sins should be punished, since he was determined to have respect paid to the will of the Emperor, whose heart was filled with quite paternal kindness for strangers, as we had ourselves experienced in the treatment we had received at Sse-tchouen, and all along the road. He added that we should be equally well treated at Hou-pé, that we must not believe those stories of two of our countrymen having been put to death in past times. Those were merely idle and false reports invented by low people, whose tongues were always active, and given to lying.

We did not think it necessary to insist upon the point, and prove to him that the martyrdom of MM. Clet and Perboyre was something very different from an idle rumour; we contented ourselves with observing that it was always known in France in what manner Frenchmen were treated in foreign countries, that our government might appear sometimes not to notice it, but that it would not fail to remember it in due time. Altogether we flattered ourselves that we had produced some impression on the Governor, and that our visit would have a good result. Before leaving the apartment, therefore, we endeavoured to relax a little of the constraint of the situation by giving his Excellency some information about our long journey and Europe, which was to him almost an unknown world

At length we performed the salutations required by the Rites, and took our departure.

In crossing the hall, and descending the numerous steps of the tribunal, we could easily see that the success of our visit was already known. We were courteously saluted by all whom we met, and when we reached the first court, the introducer of guests, who had displayed so much zeal in barring our passage, hastened to meet us, and conduct us to our palanquins, with every appearance of the most cordial and profound devotion. Our bearers, whom we found waiting for us at the door with the palanquin, then took us on their shoulders, and bore us at a rapid pace back to our abode.

We had only been a few hours in this abominable cell when the tam-tam was heard sounding at the door of the little pagoda, and a Mandarin, accompanied by a numerous suite of attendants, presented himself, demanding to speak with the illustrious natives of the kingdom of France. As soon as he saw us he hastened to announce that he was charged by his Excellency the Governor to conduct us to a more suitable and more convenient lodging, one that should be more conformable to the laws of hospitality.

"When shall we go?" we asked.

"Whenever you please; probably everything is ready, for the orders were given as soon as you quitted the Governor's palace."

"Let us go immediately then," said we; "it is late, and we should be glad to rise again out of this tomb."

"Yes, that's it," cried Master Ting, who was not more satisfied than we were with this wretched little dwelling, where he was obliged to keep himself huddled up while he smoked his opium, because there was not room for him to stretch himself out; "that's it, let us rise again out of this tomb." We then packed up our goods with all possible haste, and gladly turned our backs on the detestable den.

We were conducted to the other extremity of the town, almost into the country, and were there installed in a vast and handsome establishment, half civil and half religious. It was a rich Buddhist convent, surrounded by numerous apartments destined to receive Mandarins of distinction on their arrival at Ou-tchang-fou. There were gardens, courts planted with lofty forest trees, belvederes, and terraces on peristyles, which gave an air of pomp and grandeur to the place that contrasted strikingly with the mean little pagoda we had just left; but what we prized above all else was the sweet fresh air of the country that we drew in in long breaths.

As soon as we were settled in our dwelling, the Mandarin who had brought us here sent for the cook of the establishment, and he

arrived quickly with a pencil between his teeth, a sheet of paper in one hand, and an inkstand in the other, and placing himself at the end of the table, rubbed a little ink upon a slab, and begged us to mention the names of the dishes we preferred.

"It is a fact known to all the world," said the Mandarin, "that the Western nations do not feed in the same manner as the inhabitants of the Central Kingdom, and as far as possible we must comply with people's usages and customs." We thanked the Mandarin for his polite attention, but said we had now for a long time been in the habit of living quite in the Chinese manner. The "Superintendent of the Cauldron" need only follow the inspirations of his own talents, and all would be well. A list of dishes would be quite superfluous. We should have found it, indeed, very hard to make one; for, during all these years we had had to accustom ourselves to so many kinds of cookery, and had eaten of so many odd things, that we were now hardly capable of appreciating culinary skill, and our ideas on the subject of dishes had become extremely vague and confused. Everything that had not the taste of barley flour, flavoured with suet, was acceptable to us.

The head cook gathered up his writing materials, and took his departure, quite proud and elated at the mark of confidence we had shown him, and of which, we may add, he proved himself thoroughly worthy. The skill with which he compounded for us a number of Chinese ragouts, each better than the last, was such as to show that we could not have done better than confide entirely in his genius and discretion.

The day after our moving into this new habitation, Master Ting, accompanied by his colleague, the military Mandarin, and the numerous soldiers and attendants who had escorted us since our departure from the capital of Sse-tchouen, came in a body, and with a certain air of solemnity, to our apartments, to bid us farewell. Having been charged only to conduct us to Ou-tchang-fou, their mission was now ended, and they were about to return to their own country.

We had travelled in company by land and water now for the space of two months; we had gradually become accustomed to live together; we had shared in the good and the bad times on the road; and it was not without a kind of emotion that we now saw the moment arrive that was to separate us for ever. Our regrets were certainly not as lively and profound as those we had experienced in bidding adieu to our Thibetan escort. We had no friendly ties to sever, but merely a certain habit of being together, which is easily acquired during long and toilsome journeys, and

which it is disagreeable to break off in order to form new ones. Master Ting had provoked us more than once, and we had often quarrelled; yet, on the whole, we had become tolerably good friends. At bottom he was not a bad fellow, for a Mandarin; and if one only let him play the Chinese a little, that is to say, finger the sapecks right and left all along the road, he was tolerably good-humoured and amiable.

Our farewells were extremely verbose, but instead of weeping, we laughed a great deal as we recollected many curious incidents of the journey. We afterwards showed him a piece of politeness, *à la Chinoise,* by inquiring whether, in a pecuniary point of view, he had reason to be satisfied with having accompanied us, and had made a pretty round sum by it.

"Why, yes," he said, rubbing his hands, "the business has been pretty good; I have got together a nice little lot of ingots; but you know, of course, it was not for the sake of money that I wished to accompany you."

"Oh, of course not; who could think that?"

"It is evident that I don't like money; I never did; but I should like to offer a little present to my mother on my return. It is for her sake I wish to make some profit."

"That is, Master Ting, a fine and noble feeling. In loving money, then, you only practise filial piety?"

"Exactly; filial piety is the very foundation of the social relations; it ought to be the prime motive of all our actions." And Master Ting took his leave, wishing that the star of happiness might shine on our route all the way to Canton.

He went off quite delighted with the idea of having persuaded us that he had been induced by pure filial piety to fleece the Mandarins, all along the road from the capital of Sse-tchouen to Ou-tchang-fou.

The only one of our Sse-tchouen escort who did not leave us here was the servant, Wei-chan, whom the Viceroy, Pao-hing, had engaged for us. This young man had acquitted himself of his duty with intelligence and activity, and even appeared to have formed a kind of attachment to us — at least, as far as we could possibly expect from a Chinese servant. He had been, like the rest, appointed to attend us only to Ou-tchang-fou; but the evening before the departure of his companions, he had come to express a desire to remain with us till we reached Canton. His proposal not only met with no objection on our part, but was even eagerly accepted, though we did not think it prudent to express all our satisfaction to him. He had by this time become perfectly ac-

quainted with our habits, and knew, as the Chinese say, "the taste of our characters;" and it was much more agreeable to us to have to do with a man to whom we were already accustomed, and who suited us tolerably well, than with a stranger. Wei-chan could also be of great service to us with the new escort that we were to take at Ou-tchang-fou. The one that was leaving us, and which in the latter part of our journey had behaved extremely well, had, including its chief, Master Ting, cost us an immensity of trouble to bring into such good order. We had spent so much pains upon it, that the idea of having all our work to do over again was rather disheartening. Now we calculated that the presence of Wei-chan would save us the trouble of undertaking another course of education for our future travelling companions; he would serve as a good example to the rest, and continue all our good traditions. It was therefore decided that he should accompany us to Canton.

After the departure of our Sse-tchouen escort, the Mandarin who had conducted us to our new abode came to pay us a visit of ceremony, and to announce to us that he had been appointed by his Excellency the Governor to conduct us to Nan-tchang-fou, the capital of Kiang-si. He begged us afterwards to give him our opinion on the propriety of the Governor's choice of him for an affair of so much importance. There were not two ways to answer such a question in China, so we replied, that in such a choice the Governor had proved most indisputably his possession of the rare gift of discernment into the characters of men, and that also his Excellency had shown no less clearly his desire to render our journey fortunate and agreeable. Before our departure we would not fail to go and thank him for this signal mark of his solicitude and benevolence. Our new conductor made in return for our courtesy the humblest speeches, and assured us that he had never before met with men whose hearts were so capacious and so merciful.

When this performance was over, we tried to have a little rational conversation. We learned that our Mandarin was forty years of age, that he was called *Lieou*, that is, "The Willow;" that he belonged to the literary class, but had only attained a low grade; that he had formerly had the government of a small district, but that he was at present out of office.

By his language it was easy to see that he was a native of the North, from the province of Ching; namely, the country of Confucius, which by no means implies that his intelligence was of a very high order. More grave and somewhat more dignified than Master Ting, he was also more reserved, and not so amusing; it

was besides not very agreeable to talk with him, as he expressed himself with extreme difficulty. In his ordinary moods he slipped his words together, so that we understood him very imperfectly, and when he became at all excited his talk got into such confusion, such an inextricable imbroglio, that we understood nothing at all. His physiognomy was very unmeaning; there remained to him only a few fragments of his teeth, and his goggle eyes that were seen bolting out behind the glasses of his spectacles had the infirmity of frequently shedding tears; so that when we found his name was "Willow," we could not help adding an epithet, and calling him "The Weeping Willow."

It was agreed between us that the new escort should be organised as quickly as possible, and so as to be ready for us to set off again in four days.

The visit that we had had the audacity to make to the Governor of Hou-pé had produced two good effects. First, we had recovered our lost influence; and secondly, we had obtained an excellent lodging, where, while we were waiting the arrangements for our departure, we might recover from the fatigues of our journey, and also find around us many amusements. Besides the company of the Mandarins who resided in the same establishment, we had from time to time that of the principal functionaries of the town, who did not fail to come and pay their respects to us, as soon as they learned that we were in favour with the Governor. We could also enjoy, without going out, the pleasure of walking in the courtyards shaded by large trees, or in the immense garden, where — though it was not so ornamental and elegant as that of Sse-ma-kouang — there was a pretty belvedere, and the most capricious winding paths imaginable.

Sometimes we went to visit the Buddhist temple, situated at the centre of the establishment, and endeavoured to make out the meaning of the enigmatical sentences with which the walls were adorned.

We could not exactly understand what this building was; there were wings devoted to the service of travelling Mandarins; there were vast saloons destined for literary meetings, and assemblies of several other corporations; there was an observatory, and a theatre, and a pagoda; and all this went by the name of Si-men-yuen, Garden of the Western Gate. You often find in the large towns of China these unaccountable establishments, devoted to a variety of purposes. Their construction is very difficult to describe; you can only say it is quite Chinese. The public edifices, temples, houses, towns, of the Celestial Empire, have all a certain

character peculiar to them which does not belong to any known order of architecture; one might call it the Chinese style; but no one could have an exact idea of it without having been in China.

The towns are almost all built on the same plan: they are usually of the quadrilateral form, and surrounded by high walls, flanked with towers at certain distances, and sometimes also by ditches, wet or dry. In books which speak of China, it is said that the streets of the towns are broad and perfectly straight, but it is not less true that others are narrow and tortuous, especially in the cities of the south. We have seen here and there some exceptions, but they are extremely rare. The houses in town as well as in the country are low, and have seldom more than one story. Those of the first class are built of brick or painted wood, varnished on the outside, and roofed with grey tiles; the second are of wood or clay, with thatched roofs. The buildings of the north are always inferior to those of the south, especially in the villages. In the houses of the rich there are usually several courts, one behind another, and in the last are the apartments of the women and the gardens. A southern aspect is always preferred. The whole of one side of the apartments is usually occupied by windows, in which either talc painted in various designs, a sort of transparent shell, or white and coloured paper, is used instead of glass. The edges of the roof are turned up to form a gutter, and the corners decorated with dragons and other fabulous animals. The shops are supported by pilasters, ornamented with inscriptions on painted and varnished boards, and the mixture of colours produces from a distance a very agreeable effect. Very few private houses can be called magnificent, though the term may be applied to some public edifices. At Pekin the Government offices and the palaces of the princes are raised on a basement, and covered with varnished tiles; but the most remarkable monuments are the bridges, towers, and pagodas. The bridges are very numerous, and we have seen some stone ones, composed of arches of great strength and span, that were very handsome and imposing in appearance. At a short distance from the towns of the first, second, and third order, you almost always see a more or less lofty tower standing apart and solitary like a colossal sentinel. According to Indian tradition, when Buddah died, his body was burnt, and his bones divided into eight parts, which were inclosed in so many urns, to be deposited in towers of eight floors.

Thence originate, it is said, these towers, so common in China, and in all the countries into which Buddhism has penetrated. The number of these floors is nevertheless uncertain, and their form is

also very variable. There are some round, some square, some hexagonal or octagonal, and they are built of wood, of brick, even of earthenware, like that of Nankin, the ornaments of which being of porcelain have procured for it the name of the porcelain tower. Most of these monuments, however, are now falling into ruins, but in the ancient poems are found passages which attest the luxury and magnificence formerly displayed by the Emperors in their construction. "When I raise my eyes towards the tower of stone, I must seek its top in the clouds. The sheen of its bricks glitters with gold and purple, and reflects, like a rainbow, the rays of the sun." A censor, to express energetically the inutility and enormous expense of the famous tower of Tchang-ngan, calls it "the half of a city." A poet, in rather a satirical vein, in speaking of one of these edifices which was five hundred feet high, after several strophes expressive of astonishment and admiration at the project and execution of so great a work, continues:—"I am in fear of asthma, and I have not dared to ascend to the highest terrace, whence men below appear like ants. To mount so many steps as that is only for those young loins, that have the strength to carry in their hands or on their heads the revenues of several provinces." There were formerly, according to the Chinese books, towers of white marble, of gilt brick, and even of copper; at all events in part. They had three, five, seven, nine, even thirteen floors, and their outward form varied as much as their internal decoration. There were some that had galleries or balconies diminishing in width at each floor; some were built in the midst of the waters, some on an enormous mass of steep rocks, upon which, nevertheless, trees and flowers were made to grow, and where you saw cascades and waterfalls. The ascent to the platform on which they were built was by a set of steps roughly cut, and winding round the sides of the rock, or even through it by vaults and caverns imitated from those of mountains, and suspended like them over precipices.

When you reached the platform you found, as it were, enchanted gardens; and from the midst of these rose the towers, which must have been of extraordinary beauty, to judge from the remains still existing.

The pagodas or idol temples are scattered all over China with incredible profusion; there is no village that does not possess several of them, and they are seen on all the roads, and even in the fields. The city of Pekin, it is said, possesses ten thousand of them. It must be added that the greater part of these pagodas do not differ much from other buildings. Very often they are only like

small chapels, in which there are niches with idols in them, and vases with burning perfume.

There are, nevertheless, some that exhibit a richness, grandeur, and beauty, worthy of much admiration, such, for instance, as the Temples of Heaven and Earth at Pekin, and in the provinces several celebrated pagodas, to which the Chinese make pilgrimages at certain times of the year.

The ornaments and decorations of these temples are, as may be supposed, quite in the Chinese taste — and full of caprice and confusion — and the paintings and sculptures have little artistic merit, as the arts of design are very imperfectly cultivated in China. The painters only excel in certain mechanical processes relating to the preparation and application of colours; in their compositions they pay no attention whatever to perspective, and their landscapes are most distressingly monotonous. Their best performances are in miniatures and water colours, but though not devoid of a certain kind of beauty, they are still very inferior in style to the most mediocre of European paintings. The sculptures in the pagodas have often merit in the details, but want both elegance and correctness of form. The Chinese assert that the painters and sculptors of former times, especially of the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, were greatly superior to those of the present day; and one may be tempted to subscribe to that opinion after having visited the old curiosity shops, where you find articles of real merit.

Temples of any great antiquity are not found in China, as they have seldom been built strong enough to resist the ravages of time, or wilful injury; when they decay they are usually left to go to ruin as they may, and new ones built. The *Song* dynasty, says a Chinese proverb, made the roads and the bridges, the *Tang* the towers, the *Ming* the pagodas.

We may add, that the present dynasty, the Tsing, have made nothing, and do not even try to preserve what has been made by others. In considering the prodigious number of the temples, pagodas, and oratories, which rise in all parts of China, one might be tempted to think the Chinese a very religious people, but on looking closely at the matter, it is easy to see that these external manifestations are only the result of old customs, and no indication at all of pious feelings and ideas. The Chinese of the present day are, as we have already said, entirely absorbed in material interests and the enjoyments of the present life, and totally indifferent to religion in every form.

Their annals attest, nevertheless, that at various epochs they have been deeply interested in certain religious systems, which

after many vicissitudes, have at length become acclimatised in the Empire, and still exist there, at all events nominally.

There can hardly be said to be any such thing as a state religion in China, but all religions are tolerated, provided, at least, they are not regarded as politically dangerous. Three principal religions are admitted and considered as equally good—one might say equally true—although there have been long and bitter wars between them. The first and most ancient is that called *jou-kiao*, "The Doctrine of the Lettered," of which Confucius is regarded as the patriarch and reformer. It is based on a philosophic pantheism, which has been variously interpreted at different epochs. It is believed that in the highest antiquity the existence of an Omnipotent God distributing rewards and punishments was recognised in it; and various passages in the writings of Confucius give room to think that the sage himself acknowledged such a one; but the vague sense in which he has used his words, the little anxiety he has shown to inculcate such a belief on his disciples, and the care he takes to base his ideas of morality* and justice upon the principles of the love of order and a certain not very well-defined conformity with the will of heaven and the progress of nature, have permitted his followers to err so far, that several of them have fallen into a true Spinozism, and have taught, while referring always to the authority of their master, a materialistic system that is degenerating into atheism. Confucius, in fact, is never religious in his writings; he contents himself with recommending in general the observance of the ancient practices of filial piety and fraternal love; and the bringing the conduct into conformity with the laws of heaven, with which human actions ought always to harmonise.

In reality, the religion and the doctrine of Confucius is a system of positivism. Little do the Chinese care about long philosophical lucubrations, little for questions concerning the origin, creation, and end of the world. They ask of time only what may suffice for life; of science and letters only what is required to fill official

* And what morality! *Tse-hien*, a disciple, asks Confucius how a son ought to bear himself towards the enemy of his father. "Let him lie down in a mourning habit," replies Confucius, "and have only his weapons for a pillow. Let him accept no employment till the enemy of his father no longer exists upon the earth. Should he meet him, either in the palace or in the market-place, let him not go home to fetch his arms, but attack him on the spot." In another passage this famous moralist expresses himself thus: "the murderer of your father ought not to remain under the same sky with you; you must not lay by your arms as long as the murderer of your brother still lives, and you cannot live in the same kingdom with that of your friend."

employments; of the greatest principles only their practical consequences; and of morality nothing but the political and utilitarian part; in a word, they are what at the present day many in Europe are striving to become. They put aside all grand disputes, all speculative questions, to attach themselves to the positive. Their religion itself is only a kind of civilisation, and their philosophy the art of living in peace, of commanding and obeying.

The State has always retained as a civil institution the worship paid to the spirits of heaven and earth, of the stars, the mountains, and the rivers, as well as to the souls of deceased relations; it is an external religion for official personages and literary men who aspire to any office; but no one regards it as anything more than a social institution, the meaning of which may be interpreted in different ways, and from which no consequence need be drawn.

This worship has no priests and no idols; every magistrate practises it within the sphere of his own jurisdiction; and the Emperor himself is the patriarch or head of it. Generally, all literary persons, and those who propose to become such, attach themselves to it, though often without renouncing practices borrowed from other religions. But conviction does not seem to have anything to do with the matter in either case; and habit alone induces them to conform to ceremonies which they themselves turn into ridicule—such as divination, casting horoscopes, and counting lucky and unlucky days, all which superstitions are in great vogue throughout the Empire.

Whatever is least vague and most serious in the religion of the Chinese is absorbed by the worship of Confucius. His tablet is in all the schools; masters and pupils are required to prostrate themselves before this venerated name, at the beginning and at the end of the classes, and his image is to be found in the academies and the places where the learned assemble, and where literary examinations are carried on. All the towns have temples raised in his honour, and more than three hundred millions of men proclaim him the saint *par excellence*. Never has it been given to any mortal to exercise during so many centuries so extensive an empire over his fellow-creatures, or to receive homage so much like true worship, although every one knows perfectly well that Confucius was simply a mortal man, who lived in the principality of Lan-sin, six centuries before the Christian era.

A worship, at the same time civil and religious, rendered to a simple citizen by an immense nation for four and twenty centuries! There is nothing in human annals comparable to it. The descendants of Confucius, who exist still in great numbers, participate in

the honours paid by the Chinese nation to their glorious ancestor; they constitute the sole hereditary nobility of the Empire, and enjoy certain privileges appertaining to them alone.

The second religion in China is regarded by its professors as the primitive religion of the ancient inhabitants, and it has consequently many analogies with the preceding; only that the individual existence of spirits and demons, independently of the parts of nature over which they preside, is more fully recognised by it. The priests and priestesses of this worship are devoted to celibacy, and practise magic, astrology, necromancy, and many other absurd superstitions. They are called Tao-sse, or Doctors of Reason, because their fundamental dogma taught by the famous Lao-tze, the contemporary of Confucius, is that of the existence of the primordial reason that created the world.

Lao-tze being little known to Europeans, it may not be irrelevant here to enter into some details concerning the life and opinions of this philosopher. We borrow them from an excellent notice of him, published by M. Abel Rémusat, in his *Mélanges Asiatiques.*

"I have subjected to a profound examination the doctrines of a philosopher, very celebrated in China, though very little known in Europe, and whose writings, being very obscure, and consequently very little read, are not much better appreciated in his own country than in ours, where his name has hardly been heard.

"The traditions that have been current concerning this philosophy, and for the knowledge of which we are indebted to the missionaries, are not of a nature to invite any serious inquiry. What was most positively known was, that this sage, whom one of the three sects of China acknowledges as its head, was born 2400 years ago, and wrote a book that has come down to posterity under the pompous title of 'The Book of Reason and Virtue.' From this title, his followers have bestowed on themselves that of 'Doctors of Reason;' and they support their claim to this denomination by a thousand extravagances. It is from them we learn that the mother of their patriarch bore him in her womb nine times nine years, and that he came into the world with grey hair, which procured for him the title of Lao-tze ('Old Child'), under which he is commonly known. It is recorded also that towards the end of his life, this philosopher left China, and travelled very far into the West, to the countries where, according to some, he obtained his opinions, and, according to others, taught them. In searching for the details of his life, I have met with many wonderful things told of him by the ignorant sectaries who suppose they are following his doctrine. For instance, as they admit the dogma of the

transmigration of souls, they imagine that of their master not to have been its first birth when it came to animate the body above mentioned, but to have already appeared several times upon the earth. It is known that Pythagoras pretended to have formerly reigned in Phrygia under the name of Midas; that he remembered to have been that Euphorbius who wounded Menelaus, and that he recognised in the temple of Juno at Argos the buckler that he had borne at the siege of Troy. These sorts of genealogies cost nothing to those that fabricate them, but that which has been made for Lao-tze is certainly magnificent. Among other transformations, his soul had descended many ages before into the western countries, and had converted the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, 600 years before the building of Rome!

"It appears to me that these fables might have relation to the principles inculcated by Lao-tze, and, perhaps, present some traces of the circumstances that carried them to the extremity of Asia. I was interested in inquiring whether this sage, whose life offers so many points of resemblance with the philosopher of Samos, might not have also in his opinions some more real conformity with him. My examination of his book fully confirmed this conjecture, and also effected a complete change in the opinion I had formed of the writer. Like many other founders of religious systems, he was far from foreseeing the direction that the doctrines he taught were to take in future ages, and should he ever appear again upon the earth he would have much cause to complain of the wrong done to him by his unworthy disciples. Instead of the head of a sect of jugglers, magicians, and astrologers, seeking for the elixir of immortality, and the means of reaching heaven by raising themselves through the air, I found in his book a true philosopher, a judicious moralist, an eloquent theologian, and a subtle metaphysician. His style has the majesty of Plato; and we must own also something of his obscurity. He expresses similar conceptions almost in the same language; and the analogy of the expressions is not less striking than that of the ideas. Here, for example, in speaking of the Supreme Being: — 'Before the chaos that preceded the birth of the heavens and the earth, one only being existed — immense, silent, immoveable yet incessantly active — that is the mother of the universe. I know not how this being is named; but I designate it by the word reason. Man has his model in the earth, the earth in the heavens, the heavens in reason itself.' The morality professed by Lao-tze is worthy of this beginning; according to him perfection consists in being without passion, in order the better to contemplate the harmony of the universe. There is not, he says, any greater

sin than ill-regulated desires, nor any greater misfortune than the torments that are the just punishment of them. He did not seek to diffuse his doctrine. 'If one has discovered a treasure,' he says, 'one conceals it carefully.' The most solid virtue of the sage consists in knowing how to pass for a fool. He adds that the wise man should follow the times, and adapt himself to circumstances; a precept that one might think superfluous, but which was doubtless intended to be understood in a sense different from that which it has among us. For the rest, his philosophy breathes nothing but mildness and benevolence. He is averse only to hard-hearted and violent men. Mention has been sometimes made of this passage concerning conquerors: 'The least glorious peace is preferable to the most brilliant successes of war. The most splendid victory is but the light from a conflagration.' 'He who adorns himself with laurels loves blood, and deserves to be blotted out from the number of men.' The ancients said, 'Render no funeral honours to conquerors; receive them with tears and cries, in memory of the homicides they have committed, and let the monuments of their victories be environed with tombs.'

"The metaphysics of Lao-tze offer many remarkable traits that we are constrained to pass over in silence. How in fact could we give an idea of the high abstractions, the inextricable subtleties, in which his oriental imagination wanders and loses itself. It is sufficient to say that the opinions of the Chinese philosopher on the origin and constitution of the universe present no ridiculous fables or monstrous absurdities; they bear the impress of a noble and elevated mind, and in the sublime reveries that distinguish them they present a striking and indisputable resemblance to the doctrines professed a little later in the schools of Pythagoras and Plato. Like the Pythagoreans and Platonists, our philosopher admits as a first cause Reason — a being ineffable, uncreated, who is the type of the universe, but who has no type but himself. Like Pythagoras, he regards human souls as emanations from this ethereal substance, and supposes that after death they are re-united with it; he also agrees with Plato in refusing to the wicked the faculty of re-entering the bosom of this universal soul. Like Pythagoras, he gives to the first principles of things the names of numbers, and his cosmogony is in some measure algebraical. He attaches the chain of being to him whom he calls *One* — then to *Two* — then to *Three* — who he says have made all things. The divine Plato, who had adopted this mysterious dogma, seems to fear revealing it to the profane; he envelopes it in clouds in his famous letter to three friends; he teaches it to Dionysius of Syracuse, but in enigmas, as

he says himself, for fear that his tablets, passing over land and sea, might fall into the hands of some unknown person who should read and understand them.

"Possibly the then recent recollection of the death of Socrates might have contributed to occasion this reserve. Lao-tze does not employ all this circumlocution, and it is clearly laid down in his book, that it was a threefold being who formed the universe."

This thought confirms all that has been already indicated in the tradition of the journey of Lao-tze towards the West, and leaves little doubt concerning the origin of his doctrine. Probably he received it from the Jews of the Ten Tribes, whom the conquests of Salmanasar had just dispersed over Asia; or from the apostles of some Phœnician sect, to which belonged also the philosophers who were the precursors and masters of Pythagoras and Plato. In a word, we find in the writings of this Chinese philosopher the dogmas and opinions which formed, to all appearance, the basis of the Orphic faith, and of that antique oriental wisdom which the Greeks sought for in the school of the Egyptians, the Thracians, and the Phœnicians.

It is now certain that Lao-tze drew from the same sources as the masters of ancient philosophy; but one would like to know who were his immediate preceptors, and what countries of the West he visited. We know by a credible witness that he went to Bactria, and it is not impossible that he penetrated as far as Judea, or even Greece. A Chinese at Athens presents indeed an idea that runs counter to our opinions, or rather our prejudices, concerning the relations of ancient nations; but I believe, nevertheless, that we should accustom ourselves to it; and that though it cannot be positively proved that our Chinese philosopher did really reach Greece, it is not improbable that there were Chinese there about that period, and that the Greeks may have alluded to them in those Scythians and Hyperboreans whom they mention as remarkable for the mildness and elegance of their manners. Besides this, if Lao-tze stopped in Syria, after having traversed Persia, he must already have gone three parts of the way, and overcome the greatest difficulties in the passage across the plateau of high Asia.

Since we have attached ourselves exclusively to the search after facts, we can hardly conceive that any one should undertake such a long and toilsome journey from the sole desire to become acquainted with opinions; but that was the time for philosophic travels, — men were willing to brave every fatigue in the search after wisdom, or what they took for such; and the love of truth had power to stimulate them to enterprises upon which even the love

of gain would have hardly ventured. There is an air of romance about these long wanderings, that half prevents us from believing in them. We can hardly imagine that at those remote periods, when geography was so imperfect, and the world enveloped in obscurity, philosophers should quit their country, and pass through a thousand obstacles, over a considerable part of the ancient continent, without what we should consider more substantial motives. But all facts that are difficult of explanation are not to be rejected, and facts of this kind multiply upon us as we penetrate further into the ancient history of the East. What we are tempted to think is that the obstacles were not so great as we have imagined, nor the countries so entirely unknown. The recollections of ties of kindred still, it may be, linked the nations of the antique world one to another; and hospitality, the virtue of barbarous nations, dispensed the traveller from the necessity of many precautions that he could not now safely neglect. Religion favoured their progress, which was in some measure but a long pilgrimage from temple to temple, from school to school.

At all times commerce has had her caravans, and from the highest antiquity there were in Asia certain tracks marked out, which naturally continued to be followed, till the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope changed the direction of these long journeys. In our opinion the civilised nations of antiquity were by no means so much strangers to each other, or so isolated, as is commonly supposed, because the motives that urged them to communicate one with another are unknown to us. We are sometimes disposed to place to the account of their ignorance what is in fact only attributable to our own. In this respect we might justly apply to ourselves what is said in relation to morals by one of the most celebrated disciples of the sage whose opinions we have just been inquiring into. "A vivid light shone on the highest antiquity, of which only a few rays have reached us. It appears to us that the ancients were in darkness because we see them only through the thick clouds from which we ourselves have but just issued. Man is an infant born at midnight, who, when he sees the sun rise, thinks that yesterday has never existed." Confucius was in frequent communication with Lao-tze, but it is difficult to know what was his opinion of the doctrines of the patriarch of the Doctors of Reason. One day he went to pay him a visit, and when he returned to his disciples, he remained three days without pronouncing a word. Tseu-kong was surprised at this, and asked the cause of his silence. "When," said Confucius, "I see a man make use of his thoughts to escape me, like a bird that flies away, I dispose mine like a bow armed with its arrows

to pierce him, and I never fail to reach him and master him. When I see a man making use of his thoughts to escape me like an agile stag, I arrange mine like a running dog to pursue him, and I never fail to come up with him, and throw him down; when a man makes use of his thoughts to escape from me like a fish of the deep, I arrange mine like the hook of the fisherman, and I never fail to take him, and get him into my power. But as to the dragon who rises on the clouds and floats in ether, I cannot pursue him. I have seen Lao tze, and he is like the dragon. At his voice my mouth remained wide open; my tongue came out of it with astonishment, and I had not the power to draw it back; my soul was plunged into perplexity, and has not been able to recover its previous calmness."

Whatever may be said of the philosophical ideas of Lao-tze, his disciples, the Doctors of Reason, do not at present enjoy any great popularity. The superstitions to which they abandon themselves are so extravagant, that the most ignorant make them an object of sarcasm. They have rendered themselves especially notorious by their pretended elixir of immortality; though they gained great credit for it with many famous Emperors. The Chinese annals are full of the disputes and quarrels of the Lao-tze with the disciples of Confucius, and the latter have employed the weapons of ridicule against them with the greatest success, and have never failed to turn the laugh against the Doctors of Reason, as well as against the Bonzes, the priests of Buddhism, which is the third religion of China.

Towards the middle of the first century of our era, the Emperors of the dynasty of Han admitted Indian Buddhism officially into their dominions. This religion, which has material representations of the divinity, spread rapidly among the Chinese under the name of the "religion of Fo," an imperfect transcription of the name of Buddha. So vast a religious system, professed by more than three hundred millions of followers, well deserves that we should enter into some details with respect to its origin, its doctrine, and its propagation among the nations of high Asia. The word Buddha is a very ancient generic name, having in Sanscrit a double root. The one signifies being, existence; the other wisdom, superior intelligence. It is the name by which was originally designated the creative omnipotent God; but it has been extended to those who worshipped him, and sought to raise themselves to him by contemplation and holiness. All the Buddhists, however, whom we have met in China, Tartary, Thibet, and Ceylon, intend by this name to denote an actual historical personage.

who has become celebrated throughout Asia, and who is regarded as the founder of the institutions and doctrines comprised under the general name of Buddhism.

In the eyes of Buddhists this personage is sometimes a man and sometimes a god, or rather, he is both one and the other. He is a divine incarnation, a man-god, who came into the world to enlighten men, to redeem them, and point out to them the way of salvation. This idea of a redemption of the human race by a divine incarnation is so general and popular among the Buddhists, that we have everywhere found it reduced to a neat formula, expressed in remarkable terms. If we addressed to a Mongol or a Thibetan this question, "Who is Buddha?" He replied instantly, "The Saviour of Men." The marvellous birth of Buddha, his life and his instructions, contain a great number of moral truths and dogmas professed in Christianity, and which we need not be surprised to find also among other nations, since these truths are traditional, and have always belonged to the heritage of humanity. There must be among a pagan people more or less of Christian truth, in proportion as they have been more or less faithful in preserving the deposit of primitive traditions.

From the concordant testimony of Indian, Chinese, Thibetan, Mongol, and Cingalese books, we may place the birth of Buddha about the year 960 before Christ; the variation of a few years, more or less, is of little consequence. Klaproth has extracted from the Mongol books, which are merely translations from Thibetan or Sanscrit, the legend of Buddha, of which we are about to give a succinct analysis.

"Soutadanna, chief of the House of Chakia, of the caste of Brahmins, reigned in India over the powerful Empire of Magadha, in Southern Bahar, the capital of which was Kaberchara. He married Mahamaia, 'The Great Illusion,' but did not consummate his marriage with her. She, although a virgin, conceived by divine influence, and on the fifteenth day of the second month of spring, she brought into the world a son, whom she had borne in her womb three hundred days. Taking him in her arms, she presented him to a king, who was also an incarnation of Brahma (in Mongol, Esroum Tingri), and who enveloped him in a piece of precious stuff, and lavished upon him the most tender cares. Another king, an incarnation of Indra (in Mongol, Hormousta Tingri), baptized the young god in divine water. The child received the name of Arddha Chiddi, and was immediately recognised as a divine person, it being foretold that he would surpass in holiness all preceding incarnations. Every one adored him, saluting him with

the title of God of Gods (in Mongol, Tingri in Tingri). Ten virgins were charged to serve him, seven to bathe him, seven to dress him, seven to rock him to sleep, seven to keep him clean, seven to amuse him with their sports, while thirty-five others charmed his ears by songs and instruments of music. When he arrived at the age of ten, they gave him several masters, amongst whom was distinguished the sage Babourenou, from whom he learned poetry, music, drawing, mathematics, and medicine, but he soon embarrassed his tutor by questions, and afterwards begged him to teach him all languages, an indispensable condition, he said, of his apostleship, which was to enlighten the world, and spread among all nations the knowledge of religion and of the true doctrine The preceptor, however, was acquainted only with the idiom of India, and the pupil therefore taught the tutor fifty foreign languages with their peculiar characters, and he soon surpassed the whole human race.

"When he had reached the proper age, he refused to marry unless they could find him a virgin possessing thirty-two virtues and perfections, and by dint of searching they did at last discover one, but it was necessary to dispute possession of her with her uncle, who had also sought her in marriage. He was then twenty years old—the marriage took place—and the following year the young wife brought into the world a son, and afterwards a daughter. Soon renouncing worldly vanities, he gave himself up to the practice of virtue and a contemplative life, and quitted his wife, his family, and his preceptor, who, afflicted at such a resolution, made vain efforts to dissuade him from this step. They even signified to him that they would keep him a prisoner in his palace of Kaberchara, but he declared that he would get out in spite of them, and he said to his tutor, 'Adieu, father; I am going to return to the condition of a penitent; I renounce you, my wife, my dear son, my empire; I have reasons sufficient to follow my vocation. Do not hinder me from accomplishing this step; it is for me a sacred duty.'

"Mounted on a horse brought to him by a celestial spirit, he then took flight, and went to the kingdom of Oudipa, on the borders of Naracara. There he conferred on himself the sacerdotal order, cut his hair off, and assumed the costume of a penitent. He also substituted for his own name that of Gotamâ, that is, 'He who extinguishes and kills the senses,' (*go*, senses, and *tamá*, darkness).

"When exhausted by his long austerities, he restored himself by taking the milk of the cows that Soutadanna, his father, had conducted into the neighbourhood of his retreat. A great ape

Khakho-Monsou came often to see Gotamâ; one evening it brought him some cakes made of the honey of wild bees, and figs, and presented them to him for his repast. Gotamâ, according to his custom, watered the figs and the honey with holy water, and then ate of them. The ape leaping for joy, fell into a well, and in memory of the accident the place was consecrated under the name of 'Place of the offerings of the Ape.' One day, when an elephant intoxicated with cocoa-wine was sent against him by a bad genius, he pacified it by merely making a sign with his finger.

"He afterwards chose a still wilder retreat, whither he was followed by only two disciples, Chari, the son of his preceptor, and the celebrated Malou-Toni. Yet, remote as this retreat was, his enemies found means to discover it, and thought to tempt him by insidious questions. Eriktou and Debeltoun presented themselves first, and inquired with feigned modesty, 'Gotamâ, what is thy doctrine? Who was thy tutor? From whom didst thou receive the priesthood?' 'I am holy by my own merit,' replied Gotamâ; 'it is I who have consecrated myself my own minister. What have I to do with other teachers? Religion has penetrated my being.' He repelled the seductions of many women, and on that occasion caused the tutelary genius of this globe to spring from the earth, and bear witness to his virtues. Five favourite disciples were then associated with their master, and their names became celebrated in the history of Buddhism; they are Godinia, Datol, Langba, Muigtsan and Sangdan. At the end of six years he quitted the desert to go and fulfil the apostolic duties for which he had prepared himself by long fasting. His disciples adored him, and immediately there shone forth a glory from the face of the saint. He then took the route to Varanasi (Benares), to make his entry, but absorbed in ecstatic contemplation, he made three times the circuit of this sacred town before ascending the throne, which the founders of three anterior religious epochs had successively occupied. After having taken possession of this supreme seat, he adopted the name of Chakia-Mouni, 'the penitent of Chakia,' lived in solitude, and continued the preparatory meditations by which he fitted himself for his new functions. Followed by his five disciples he afterwards crossed the deserts, and betook himself to the sea-shore, being every where received with veneration. Returning to Benares he there unfolded his doctrine, surrounded by an innumerable multitude of auditors of all classes. His teachings are contained in a collection of eight hundred great volumes, known under the general name of Gandjour, or Verbal Instruction. They turn exclusively on the metaphysics of creation, and on the frail and perishable nature of man.

"This monumental work is found in all the libraries of the great Buddhist convents. The finest edition is that issued at Pekin from the Imperial press. It is in four languages, Thibetan, Mongol, Mantchou and Chinese. The government is in the habit of sending copies of it as presents to the great Lama monasteries. Chakia Mouni experienced a lively opposition from the priests attached to the ancient creeds, but he triumphed over all his adversaries, after holding a discussion with them; and their chief prostrated himself before him and acknowledged himself vanquished. In memory of this triumph there was instituted a festival that lasted for the first fifteen days of the first month. Chakia-Mouni then revised the principal foundations of morals and the decalogue. Moral principles are reduced to four. 1st, mercy established on an immoveable basis; 2ndly, the aversion to all cruelty; 3rdly, a boundless compassion towards all creatures; 4thly, an inflexible adherence to the law. Then follows the decalogue, or the ten commandments and special prohibitions: 1st, not to kill; 2nd, not to steal; 3rd, to be chaste; 4thly, not to bear false witness; 5thly, not to lie; 6thly, not to swear; 7thly, to avoid impure words; 8thly, to be disinterested; 9thly, not to avenge yourself; 10thly, not to be superstitious. This last prohibition is very remarkable, and the modern Buddhists certainly do not pay much attention to it. Chakia-Mouni declared that these precepts concerning human actions were revealed to him after the four grand trials that he had gone through when he devoted himself to a state of sanctity.

"This code of morals was beginning to be diffused over all Asia when he quitted the earth, casting off his material envelope, to be re-absorbed into the universal soul, which is himself. He was then eighty-four years of age. Before bidding adieu to his disciples, he predicted that the reign of his doctrine would last five thousand years, but that at the end of this time there would be another Buddha, another man-god, predestined ages before to be the teacher of the human race. 'Until that epoch,' he added, 'my religion will be the object of persecution, and my faithful ones will be obliged to quit India, and retire to the highest summits of Thibet, and this plateau, from the top of which the observer commands the world, will become the palace, the sanctuary, and the metropolis of the true faith.'"

Such is the abridged history of the famous founder of the Buddhist religion, who endeavoured to overthrow Brahminism, the ancient religion of the Hindoos. Buddha employed both miracles and preaching as the means of diffusing his religion, and his his-

tory, as well as that of his disciples, is filled with prodigies and marvels of the most extravagant kind.

The dominant character of Buddhism is, however, a spirit of mildness, equality, and fraternity, which contrasts favourably with the hardness and arrogance of Brahminism; and Chakia-Mouni and his disciples endeavoured to put mankind at large in possession of the truths which were before regarded as the exclusive property of the privileged classes.

The perfection of the Brahmins was in some measure egotistical; their religion was only for themselves They gave themselves up to severe penance, but it was in order to share in another life the abode of Brahma.

The devotion of the Asiatic Buddhist was more disinterested. Not aspiring to elevate himself alone, he practised virtue, and applied himself to gain perfection, in order to share its benefits with other men. In the institutions of an order of religious mendicants, which in a short time increased to a prodigious extent, Chakia attracted to himself, and consoled, the poor and the unfortunate. The Brahmins mocked him, because he received into the number of his disciples miserable men, who were rejected by the first classes of Indian society. But he contented himself with replying, "My law is a law of mercy for all." One day the Brahmins were scandalised at seeing a daughter of the inferior caste of the *Tchandala* received as a religious woman. Chakia said: "There is not between a Brahmin and a man of another caste the difference that there is between gold and a stone, between light and darkness. The Brahmin, in fact, did not proceed out of the ether, or the wind. He did not cleave the earth to appear in the daylight like the fire that issues from the wood of the Arani. The Brahmin was born of a woman, like the tchandala; where, then, dost thou see the cause that should render the one noble and the other vile? The Brahmin himself, when he is dead, is abandoned as an object vile and impure, precisely like a person from another caste; where, then, is the difference?"

The religious systems of Buddhism and Brahminism resemble each other closely in many points; and the bitter persecutions which the Buddhists have experienced from the Brahmins are attributable less to a divergence of opinion upon dogmas, than to their admission of all men, without distinction of caste, to civil and sacerdotal functions, and to future rewards. The empire of Brahminism depending essentially on the hierarchy of caste, they could not but treat as enemies the reformers who proclaimed the equality of all men in this world and the next.

These persecutions were long, and extremely violent; and if we give credit to the traditions and books of the Buddhists, the number of victims must have been incalculable. At length, towards the sixth century of our era, Brahminism obtained a decisive victory over the partisans of the new religion; and the latter, expelled from Hindostan, took refuge in the Himalaya mountains, and thence spread over Thibet, Bucharia, Mongolia, China, the Burmese Empire, Japan, and even as far as Ceylon. Among the Buddhist nations we have visited, those who appear to us most sincerely attached to their religion are, first, the Mongols, then come the Thibetans, in the third place the Cingalese, and lowest in the scale stand the Chinese, who, indeed, have fallen into complete scepticism.

On our passage to Ceylon, some Buddhists of that country told us that their books alone contained the pure doctrine of Buddha, and that, according to the traditions of the country, when he was flying from the persecutions of the Brahmins, he retired into their island, and that afterwards he rose into the skies from the summit of one of their mountains, where he left the print of his foot. It is the mountain called at present Adam's Peak, as the Mussulmans pretend that the impression is that of the foot of the first of men. In the interior of the island is the famous temple of Candy, where the Buddhists preserve, as they say, one of Buddha's teeth.

CHAP. XVI.

All Religions condemned by the Chinese Government. — Formulas of Scepticism. — Condition of the Bonzes of China. — Buddhist Monasteries. — Religious Architecture. — Temple of Pou-tou. — Library of the Monastery. — Visit to the Superior of the Bonzes. — Profound Respect of the Chinese for Writing. — Convent of Bonzesses. — Ceremonies to recal the Souls of the Dying when they are escaping. — Death of a young Bachelor. — Mourning of the Chinese. — Singular Mode of lamenting the Dead. — Interments. — Worship of Ancestors. — Chinese Classification of Various Ages of Life. — Marriage in China. — Servitude of Women. — Discord in domestic Life. — Examples. — Sect of abstinent Women.

The three religions of which we have spoken in the preceding chapter, and which are personified by Confucius, Lao-tze, and Buddha, or Fo, still exist in China. After having struggled fiercely for ages, the one against the other, they are now united in universal indifferentism, and there reigns among them the most

profound peace. This result must be principally attributed to the literary classes.

The Doctors of Reason and the Buddhists had abandoned themselves to so many superstitions, that the disciples of Confucius had no great difficulty in turning them into ridicule. The pamphlets full of spirited satire which they have continually been firing off at the Bonzes and the Tao-sse have at length stifled in these people every religious sentiment, and the Emperors themselves have done their part towards plunging the nation into the scepticism which is eating away its spiritual life, and effecting its dissolution with frightful rapidity. There is still extant a collection of sentences composed by the Emperor Khang-hi for the instruction of his people; and Yoang-tching, who succeeded him on the Imperial throne, has made commentaries upon his father's sentences, which are intended to be read in public by the magistrates. One of the points on which the princely commentator particularly insists, is the propriety of cherishing an aversion to all false sects, that is to say, in fact, for all religions. He passes them in review, and condemns them all, without exception; but that of Buddhism, which is the most widely diffused in China, is especially the object of his reprobation. He speaks of the dogmas on which it rests with contempt; he turns its practices into derision.

The Buddhists, like other followers of Indian sects, attach much importance to certain words or syllables, which they repeat continually, thinking to purify themselves from their sins by the mere articulation of these holy syllables, and to effect their salvation by this easy method. The Imperial commentator rallies them keenly upon this practice. "Suppose," he says, "you had violated the laws in some way, and that you were taken into the hall of judgment to be punished; do you think, if you were to go on bawling a thousand times over, 'Your excellency! your excellency!' the magistrate would be any more likely to spare you for that?" In other passages this comparison tends to nothing less than the destruction of all idea of worship or homage rendered to the Divinity. These sentences are real lessons in atheism, addressed by a sovereign to his subjects.

"If you do not burn any paper in honour of Fo, and if you do not deposit any offerings on his altar, he will be displeased, you think, and send his judgments on your head. What a miserable creature must your god Fo be then! Let us take the example of the magistrate of your district: should you never go to compliment him, and pay your court to him, if you are honest people, attentive to your duty, he will not the less be well disposed towards

you; but if you transgress the law, commit violence, and encroach on the rights of others, he will always be dissatisfied with you, though you should find a thousand ways of flattering him." The Christian religion is, of course, not spared by the commentator of the Emperor Khang-hi, who was very favourably disposed towards the missionaries, but regarded them merely as artists and learned men, from whom he might obtain some advantage for the State, as the following passage from his successor, Yoang-tching, will tend to prove. "The sect of the Lord of Heaven," he says, "a sect that is perpetually talking about heaven and earth, and beings without substance or shadow, this religion, also, is perverted and corrupt; but as the Europeans who teach it understand astronomy and mathematics, the Government has employed them to correct the calendar. It by no means meant, however, to imply by that, that their religion was good; and you must not believe anything they tell you."

Such instruction as this, coming from so high a quarter, could not fail to bear fruit; and all belief in spiritual things and a future life has been accordingly extinguished.

The religious sentiment has vanished from the national mind; the rival doctrines have lost all authority; and their partisans, grown sceptical and impious. have fallen into the abyss of indifferentism, in which they have given each other the kiss of peace. Religious discussions have entirely ceased; and the whole Chinese nation has proclaimed this famous formula, with which everybody is satisfied, *San-kiao-y-kiao*, that is, "the three religions are but one." Thus all the Chinese are at the same time partisans of Confucius, Lao-tze, and Buddha; or rather, they are nothing at all: they reject all faith, all dogma, to live merely by their more or less depraved and corrupted instincts. The literary classes only have retained a certain taste for the classical books and moral precepts of Confucius, which every one explains according to his own fancy, invoking always the "*ly*," or principle of rationalism, which has become the only one generally recognised.

But although they have thus made a *tabula rasa* of their religious creeds, the ancient denominations have remained, and the Chinese still like to make use of them; but they are now only the memorials of feeling long since dead. Nothing more clearly indicates this desolating scepticism, than a formula of politeness exchanged between unknown persons on their first meeting. It is customary to ask to "what sublime religion" you belong. One, perhaps, will call himself a Confucian, another a Buddhist, a third

a disciple of Lao-tze, a fourth a follower of Mahomet, of whom there are many in China; and then every one begins to pronounce a panegyric on the religion to which he does *not* belong, as politeness requires; after which they all repeat in chorus, "*Pou-toun-kiao, toun-ly,*" "Religions are many; reason is one; we are all brothers." This phrase is on the lips of every Chinese, and they bandy it from one to the other with the most exquisite urbanity. It is indeed a clear and concise expression of their feeling on religious questions. In their eyes, a worship is merely an affair of taste and fashion, to which no more importance is to be attached than to the colour of your garments.

The government, the literary classes, the whole nation in fact, regards all religions as things futile and of no interest; and it may therefore easily be supposed that there reigns in China an incomparable toleration for every kind of worship. The Chinese enjoy, in fact, the most perfect liberty in this respect, provided always that the authorities can be convinced that under pretence of a religious association you are not concealing a political object injurious to the State. For this reason only, as we have said before, the Christians are reproached and persecuted by the magistrates.

No one ever thinks of persecuting the Bonzes and the Tao-sse. They are left to live in poverty and contempt in their obscure abodes, without any one ever troubling himself about them, with the exception, perhaps, of an occasional practitioner of the art of magic who may come to consult them about casting lots, or to burn some painted paper and perfumes at the feet of an idol, or to order a few prayers in the hope of immediately making a large fortune by them. The extremely slender fees that the Bonzes receive on such occasions, however, would be insufficient for their maintenance, if they neglected to make up the deficiency by some private industry. The greater part of them keep a school; and those who are not sufficiently versed in the classical books for this are compelled, in some measure, to wander about the villages and beg their rice. The revenues of the pagodas are not now as considerable as they were at some periods; and from the Bonzes and Tao-sse being able to obtain only so precarious and humiliating a subsistence, their number is continually declining. It is hardly conceivable why men not supported by a religious faith should resign themselves to such abject poverty; and, in fact, this priesthood of an extinct religion and a forsaken worship is compelled to recruit itself in a singular manner.

The Bonze who is attached to a pagoda buys, for a few sapecks,

the child of some indigent family, shaves his head, and makes a disciple of him, or rather a servant. The poor child vegetates thus in the company of his master, and by degrees accustoms himself to that mode of life. Subsequently he becomes the successor and heir of him to whom he has been sold; and he then seeks, in his turn, to procure for himself a small disciple.

In this manner is perpetuated the race of Bonzes, whose influence has been so great at different epochs, as may be seen in the annals of China, but which at the present day has completely lost all authority and credit. The people have no longer the smallest respect for them. They are often brought on the stage, and made to play the most infamous parts; indeed, such is the contempt into which they have fallen, that the insurgents have lately thought to render themselves popular by massacring them everywhere on their passage.

There were formerly in the environs of the most celebrated pagodas, great monasteries, where numerous Bonzes lived in community, in the manner of the Lamas of Thibet and Tartary. They possessed rich libraries, in which all Chinese and Indian books that had any relation to the Buddhist religion were kept. In these were to be seen the finest editions of the "*Gandgour*" or "Verbal instructions of Buddha," in 800 large volumes, and the "*Dandgour*," in 232. This last work is a sort of religious Encyclopædia, or ecclesiastical history of Buddhism. At present, however, these famous libraries are almost deserted. We have had occasion to visit a great number of them, and among the rest that of Pou-tou, one of the most renowned in the Celestial Empire.

Pou-tou is an island of the great archipelago of Chusan, on the coasts of the province of Tche-kiang. More than 100 monasteries, more or less important, and two of which were founded by Emperors, are scattered over the sides of the mountains and valleys of this picturesque and enchanting island, which nature and art have combined to adorn with their utmost magnificence. All over it you find delightful gardens, full of beautiful flowers,—grottoes cut in the living rock, amidst groves of bamboo and other trees, with aromatic banks. The habitations of the Bonzes are sheltered from the scorching rays of the sun by umbrageous foliage, and scattered about in the prettiest situations imaginable. Thousands of winding paths cross the valleys in various directions, and the brooks and rivulets, by means of pretty bridges of stone or painted wood, and for the communications between the scattered dwellings. In the centre of the island rise two vast and brilliant edifices—Buddhist temples—the yellow bricks of which

announce that their construction is due to imperial munificence. The religious architecture of the Chinese does not at all resemble ours. They have no idea of the majestic, solemn, and perhaps somewhat melancholy style, that harmonises so well with the feelings which ought to be inspired by a place devoted to meditation and prayer. When they wish to build a pagoda, they look out for the most gay and smiling site they can find on the declivity of a mountain or in a valley; they plant it with great trees of the evergreen species; they trace about it a number of paths, on the sides of which they place flowering shrubs, creeping plants, and bushes. It is through these cool and fragrant avenues you reach the building, which is surrounded by galleries, and has less the air of a temple than of a rural abode charmingly situated in the midst of a park or garden.

The principal temple of Pou-tou is reached by a long avenue of grand secular trees, whose thick foliage is filled with troops of crows with white heads; and their cawings and flapping of wings keep up a continual clamour. At the end of the avenue is a magnificent lake, surrounded with shrubs that lean over its waters like weeping willows. Turtle and gold fish gleam through them; and mandarin-ducks, in their gaily-coloured plumage, play over their surface, amidst the splendid water-lilies whose rich corollas rise majestically upon tender green stalks spotted with black. Several bridges of red and green wood are thrown over this lake, and lead to flights of steps, by which you ascend to the first of the temple buildings—a kind of porch, supported upon eight enormous granite columns. On the right and left are stationed, like sentinels, four statues of colossal size, and two side gates lead to the vestibule of the principal nave, where is enthroned a Buddhist Trinity, representing the Past, the Present, and the Future. These three statues are entirely gilt, and, although in a crouching posture, of gigantic dimensions—at least twelve feet high. Buddha is in the midst, his hands interlaced, and gravely placed on his majestic abdomen. He represents the Past, and the unalterable and eternal quiet to which it has attained; the two others, which have the arm and the right hand raised, in sign of their activity, the Present and Future. Before each idol is an altar covered with little vases for offerings, and cassolets of chiselled bronze, where perfumes are constantly burning.

A crowd of secondary divinities are ranged round the hall, the ornaments of which are composed of enormous lanterns of painted paper or horn—square, round, oval—indeed, of all forms and

colours; and the walls are hung with broad strips of satin, with sentences and maxims.

The third hall is consecrated to *Kouang-yn*, whom the greater number of accounts of China persist in regarding as a goddess of porcelain, and sometimes also of fecundity. According to the Buddhist mythology, Kouang-yn is a person of the Indian Trimourti, or Triune God, representing the creative power.

Finally, the fourth hall is a pantheon, or pandemonium, containing a complete assortment of hideous idols, with ogres' and reptiles' faces. Here you see, huddled together pell-mell, the gods of heaven and earth; fabulous monsters, patrons of war, of the silk manufacture, of agriculture, and of medicine; the images of the saints of antiquity, philosophers, statesmen, warriors, literary men —in a word, the most heterogeneous and grotesque assembly conceivable.

This temple is divided into four parts. Its building and decoration must have cost enormous sums; but at present it is in a complete state of dilapidation. The rich roof of gilt and varnished tiles is broken and defaced, so that when rain falls, it washes the heads of the poor idols, who seem to need an umbrella more than the perfumes that are burning at their feet. The other pagodas are in no better condition; some are falling entirely into ruins, and the gods lie prostrate, with their faces to the ground, and serve sometimes for seats to the curious travellers who visit this holy isle.

The vast monasteries of Pou-tou, where once dwelt multitudes of Bonzes, are now entirely abandoned to legions of rats and great spiders, which peacefully weave their enormous webs in the deserted cells. The cleanest and best preserved place is the library, and the Bonze in charge of it desired that we should pay it a visit; but we found it very inferior to those that we had seen in Tartary and Thibet. It possessed about 8000 volumes, enveloped in yellow satin, carefully ticketed and ranged in order in cases surrounding a vast saloon. They relate exclusively to the theology and liturgy of the religion of Buddha. Most of them are translations; but some are simple Chinese transcriptions of Indian books, which the Chinese can read fluently, without understanding a word of their contents. We hinted to the librarian that books of this kind could not be particularly instructive to the Bonzes.

"The religious family of Buddha," he replied, "finds now no more attraction in books. The Bonzes of Pou-tou read none— no more those they can understand than those they cannot. They

never set a foot in the library. I see none but strangers, who come to visit the place out of curiosity."

The religious Buddhist, who made this confession, did not seem to partake the indifference of his brethren; on the contrary, he was a true type of the bibliopole. For eighteen years that he had resided at Pou-tou he had scarcely quitted his library. He passed in it the whole day and a part of the night, continually occupied, he said, in sounding the unfathomable depths of the doctrine. Some books that were lying open on a table in the corner, attested, in fact, that he was doing something else than merely keeping the place; and if we had been disposed to listen to him, he was quite ready and willing to favour us with a review of the collection, accompanied by a little analysis of the contents of each volume. He did, indeed, begin with wonderful enthusiasm; and it was easy to see that he did not often find visitors complaisant enough to listen to his dissertations on what for him had become a true worship. But want of time compelled us to deprive him and ourselves of the pleasure of this learned oration.

We paid a visit to the superior of the island, whose habitation was situated near the principal temple. The apartments he occupied were almost clean; and it might even be seen that certain notions of luxury had formerly presided over their arrangement. This superior was a man of about forty years of age, whose language did not indicate any great skill in literature or theology, but whose cunning eye, and brief emphatic speech, denoted a man accustomed to business and command. He told us that for some years past he had been endeavouring to get the pagodas of the island restored, and that almost all the Bonzes under his authority were now in the interior of the Empire, in quest of the funds necessary to the realisation of his project. The collections made, however, he said, had hitherto been very small; and he did not fail to add many long lamentations over the decay of zeal for the worship of Buddha. As he knew that we were missionaries, we thought we might frankly express our own opinion on the subject of the indifference he was deploring. "We are not at all surprised," said we, "to see the Chinese cold and careless towards a worship including so many contradictory articles of faith, and which darken and confuse common sense."

"That is the thing," he replied; "your marvellous intelligence has seized the true point of the difficulty."

"Men may be seduced for a time by vain superstitions; but sooner or later they perceive their futility, and easily detach themselves from them."

"These words are full of clearness and precision."

"A religion which has no root in truth cannot satisfy the heart and mind of man. The nations may put faith in it for a time; but their faith is neither firm nor durable."

"That is the true explanation. The central nation has no more faith, and that is why my Bonzes come back with empty hands. It is known that religions are numerous, but that Reason is immutable."

"False religions, based upon lies, have, indeed, only a certain time; but truth is eternal, and consequently for all times and places. The religion of the Lord of Heaven, which is the expression of the truth, is for all men—it is immutable as its foundation."

This chief Bonze was tolerably well acquainted with the Christian doctrine; he had read several books concerning it, and among others the celebrated one of Father Ricci, upon the "True Knowledge of God." He had the politeness to tell us that our religion was sublime—incomparable, and that, as for his own, it had not even common sense; and then he added the formula customary among the Chinese — *Pou-toun-kiaotoun-ly* — "Religions are many; reason is one:" and with this deplorable conclusion he abruptly changed the subject, and began to talk to us of the fine plans he had in his head for the restoration of the pagodas.

As we left Pou-tou, we met several boats making for the port of the little island. They were laden with Bonzes, returning from their quest; and we inquired whether they had been fortunate. "Oh, yes," cried a young novice, in a transport of joy; "we are bringing back plenty of sapecks!"

Scarcely had he uttered the words before he received a hard thump on the head from an old Bonze, who was sitting, hunched up, near this indiscreet young person.

"Shaven devil!" cried the worthy man, "will you never cure yourself of telling lies? We sapecks indeed!"

The poor child hid his face in his hands, and began to cry. He seemed to understand, too late, that he had committed an imprudence, and that it is not well to reveal the secret of one's riches to the first comer. The old Bonze had had more experience. "There," said he, giving another cuff to the poor novice, "that's for your lies! I'll give you more knocks than we have sapecks." Then turning to us, he said, with bland politeness, "It is necessary to correct youth when it outrages the truth; that is an incontestable principle. Our excursion into the district of Han-Tcheou has not been fruitful. The rice harvest had been a bad one, and the people were in indigence; how, then, could they bestow alms on

the family of Buddha? We have, however, had the happiness to collect a large quantity of neglected paper, and thus to save innumerable written characters from profanation. Respect for written characters has been inculcated by the saints of antiquity." And, as he spoke, he pointed to a little boat following them, that contained a cargo of waste paper.

The flotilla of Bonzes then continued its route; and we could not help thinking that they had probably collected a tolerable sum, or the old Bonze would not have been so hard upon the young novice for his indiscretion. When a Chinese has money, he will never admit that he has; and if he boasts of having it, you may almost always be sure that his purse is empty. This mania is not peculiar to the Chinese character; it may be found elsewhere.

In showing us the boat filled with old bits of paper, the Bonze had said that respect for written characters had been recommended by the saints of antiquity; and we had, in fact, remarked, during our long abode in the Celestial Empire, that generally all the Chinese profess a profound veneration for the written word. They take great care not to put to profane uses any paper on which letters are written or printed. Coarse paper is sold at a very low price for packages and other similar purposes; but they preserve with respect whatever has writing on it, and avoid treading upon it, or dirtying it. Even the children have the same habit.

We do not believe that the Chinese attach any superstitious idea to this practice; they appear simply to intend by it to pay honour to human thought, which may be said to be incarnate, and fixed in writing. In this point of view, the scrupulous solicitude of the Chinese for the written character is, perhaps, worthy of admiration.

As, however, even in China, all are not as careful as it is supposed they ought to be of written paper, but leave it, either from neglect or forgetfulness, exposed to profanation, a certain class of Bonzes make it their special mission to institute everywhere an exact and minute search after it. They traverse towns, villages, and frequented high roads, with a hod on their backs, and a hook in their hands, and they stop by preference in places where rubbish and filth is thrown, and pick up carefully every scrap of paper they can see. Their collections are then carried into a pagoda, to be burnt before the images of the sages of antiquity.

The majority of the most celebrated pagodas of China are nearly in the same state of decay as that of Pou-tou. Decay and want of faith are everywhere perceptible, and nothing indicates that these Buddhist edifices will ever recover their ancient lustre. The remembrance of their renown attracts to them, at certain

epochs, a number of visitors ; but it is curiosity and not religion that brings them. They go to burn incense at the feet of the idols, or to bargain with the Bonzes for prayers ; but these votaries are in fact mere pleasure-seekers, and their journeys to the pagodas little parties got up for the sake of recreation. You do also occasionally meet people walking in the places sacred to Buddhist devotion, but they are mere promenaders, not pilgrims.

There do not exist any monasteries, properly so called, where Bonzes live in community. The religious Buddhists scattered over the different provinces of the Empire are independent of one another, and unconnected by any tie of discipline or hierarchy. In each house there is indeed a chief, but he is rather an administrator of temporal goods than a spiritual superior. He does not exercise any authority over his brethren, who live without any rule, just as their caprice dictates, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, being often absent for a long time from the monastery, going vagabondising about the country, as long as they can pick up a living, and only returning home when driven by hunger ; indeed, if they happen to find anywhere a position to suit them, they do not come back at all. To make yourself a Bonze, you have only to shave your head and put on a robe with long wide sleeves ; to cease to be one, merely to change your coat and let your hair grow, wearing a false tail until your own has attained the fashionable length. The religious Buddhists of China, it is obvious, are far from having the influence and importance of the Lamas of Tartary and Thibet.

Convents of Bonzesses are rather numerous in China, especially in the provinces of the south, and their costume differs very little from that of the Bonzes ; they also have their heads shaven ; they are not cloistered, and are frequently met with in the streets. If we should give credit to public rumour, we should say also that there reign great disorders in the interior of these establishments, and it is certain that respectable people, who are a little anxious about their reputation, will not set foot in them.

From all that we have said concerning the present condition of the various modes of worship recognised in China, and the position of their ministers, it is allowable to conclude that the Chinese are living absolutely without religion. There remain among them a few superstitious practices, to which they yield rather from habit than conviction, and from which they are very easily detached. No account whatever is taken of religious belief by the legislature, and the magistrates only speak of it to turn it into ridicule. The idea of an atheistical government, and an athe-

istical law, which in France was so extolled in the Chamber of Deputies, has been actually realised in China, but it does not seem that the nation has greatly gained thereby in grandeur and prosperity.

During our residence at Ou-tchang-fou, in the establishment called *Si-men-yuen*, or Garden of the Western Gate, we happened to be witnesses of an occurrence which shows how possible it is to reconcile the most superstitious practices with the total absence of any religious conviction. We have said that this vast institution, where we were awaiting the day of our departure, had various tenants of different classes. Opposite to the apartment assigned to us, in a spacious court, there was another wing of the building, in a rather elegant style. This was occupied by a retired Mandarin, with a numerous family, who had held formerly a high office in the magistracy, and who had delayed for two years his return to his native province, in the hope that his influence with the first functionaries of the town might obtain for his eldest son a small Mandarinate. This aspirant had as yet only the grade of Bachelor, though he was married, and had three children. During these two years of expectation, the hopes of the old Mandarin had not been realised, but his son, instead of being promoted to a public office, had fallen ill of a malady that seemed likely to carry him to the tomb. At the time of our arrival we found the family plunged into great grief, for the state of the sick man was so alarming that they were already preparing to make him a coffin. The death of this young man would, it was evident, be regarded by the whole family as a terrible event, for he was its hope and support.

On the very first night that we passed in our new lodging, the Garden of the Western Gate resounded with cries and the letting off of fireworks, which were heard, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, but almost without interruption. The purpose of all this clamour was to save the dying man.

The Chinese think, as we do, that death is the result of the definitive separation of the soul from the body, but they also think that the degree of illness is in direct proportion to the number of attempts which the soul makes to escape, and when the sufferer experiences the terrible crises that endanger his life, it is a proof that the soul has been momentarily absent, that it keeps going away to a certain distance, but returns again. The distance being so small, it is still able to exercise considerable influence on the body, and keep it alive, although it suffers dreadfully from this transitory separation; if the dying person falls into the last agony, it is evident that the

soul has gone with the firm resolution not to come back again. Nevertheless all hope is not yet lost, and there is a method of making it take up its abode again in the unfortunate body that is struggling with death. They try first the effect of persuasion, and endeavour by prayers and supplications to induce the soul to change its resolution. They run after it, they conjure it to come back, they describe in the most moving terms the lamentable state to which they will be reduced if this obstinate soul will not hear reason. They tell it that the happiness of the entire family depends upon it, they urge it, flatter it, overwhelm it with entreaties. "Come back, come back!" they cry, "what have we done, what have we done to you? What motive can you have for going away? Come back, we conjure you," and as no one knows very well which way the soul is gone, they run in all directions, and make a thousand evolutions in the hope of meeting it, and softening it by their prayers and tears.

If these mild and insinuating methods do not succeed, if the soul remains deaf, and persists coolly in going its own way, they adopt another course, and try and frighten it. They utter loud cries, they let off fireworks suddenly in every direction in which they imagine it might be making off; they stretch out their arms to bar its passage, and push with their hands to force it to return home and re-enter the body. Amongst those who set out on the chase after a refractory soul, there are always some more skilful than others, who manage to get upon its track. Then they summon the others to help them, calling out, "Here it is! here it is!" and immediately everybody runs that way. They then unite their forces, they concentrate their plan of operations, they weep, they groan, they lament, they let off squibs and crackers of all kinds, they make a frightful *charivari* round the poor soul, and hustle it about in all sorts of ways, so that if it does not give it up at last, it must really be a most stubborn and ill-disposed spirit.

When they are setting out on this strange errand they never fail to take lanterns with them, in order to light the soul on its way back, and take away any pretence it might make of not being able to find it. These ceremonies mostly take place during the night, because, say the Chinese, the soul is in the habit of taking advantage of the darkness to slip away. This opinion seems to be somewhat akin to that expressed by M. de Maistre, in his *Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg*:—"The night air is not good," he says, "for the physical man. The animals teach us this, when they all seek a shelter in the night; our maladies teach us this, by raging most during the night. Why do you in the morning send to ask how a sick friend

has passed the night, rather than in the evening to know how he has passed the day? It must be because there is something bad in the night."

In the Garden of the Western Gate there was, as we have already said, a fine pagoda dedicated to Buddha, of whom a gilt statue stood on the altar. The gate of this temple was open day and night, and the relations, friends, and servants of the patient were continually passing through it, and before the statue of Buddha; but no one of them ever stopped to say a prayer, to burn incense, or to implore the cure of him who seemed so dear to all; this was because these people were really without faith or religion; they did not seem to have any suspicion of the existence of an all-powerful Being, the master of life and death, who holds in his hands the destinies of all men.

All they knew was that when a person was in danger of death, it was customary to run this way and that in pursuit of his soul, and try to bring it back, and they adopted this practice simply to do as others did, without ever asking whether the custom was reasonable or absurd, and probably also without having any great confidence in it themselves.

The whole night long we were kept awake by these extraordinary manœuvres of the poor Chinese for the arrest of the fugitive soul of their dying relative. Now and then they stopped under our windows, and we heard them addressing to it such strange burlesque supplications, that the scene would have been perfectly amusing and laughable, if we had not known that a numerous family was overwhelmed by grief, and in momentary expectation of a cruel domestic calamity. Absurd as it was, there was something heartrending in hearing the voice of that old man and those little children, calling with loud cries on the soul of a father and a son.

On the following morning, as we were going towards the apartments of the sorrowing family, in the hope of being able to speak some words of consolation to them, we were met by a servant, who informed us that the sick man had just died.

The Chinese have a number of circumlocutory phrases to indicate the fact. They say the person exists no more, he has "saluted the age," he has "thanked the world," he has "ascended to the sky," &c., all so many expressions, more or less elegant, to be employed according to the quality of the individual of whom you speak. When the question is of the Emperor, they say he has "fallen or given way," for the death of the head of the Empire is regarded as so immense a catastrophe, that it can only be comparable to the fall of a mountain.

We soon saw persons going to and coming from the house of the deceased, clothed in habits of mourning, that is to say, wearing caps and girdles of white linen. For complete mourning the dress must be altogether white, even to the shoes, and the little silk cord with which the hair is plaited and knotted up. Chinese customs being always in opposition to those of Europe, as we wear black, they of course will wear white.

It is the custom in China to keep the dead a very long time in the house, sometimes even to the anniversary of their decease. In the meanwhile the body is placed in a coffin of extraordinary thickness, and covered with quick-lime, so that it does not occasion any inconvenience in the house. The object of this practice is to do honour to the dead, and give time for preparation for the funeral. His burial is the most important affair, one may say, in the life of a Chinese, the object of his most anxious solicitude. Death is a mere trifle; no one troubles himself much about that, but the quality of the coffin, the ceremonies of the funeral, the choice of a burial-place, and the spot where the grave is to be dug, all that is matter of serious consideration. When the death takes place, these cares of course are left as a legacy to his relations. Vanity and ostentation certainly have much to do with these things; every one wishes to perform the ceremony in grand style, so as to create a sensation in the country, and outdo his neighbours. To obtain the funds necessary for such a display some management is often necessary, but people are not alarmed at the most extravagant expenses; they do not shrink from the most enormous sacrifices; they will even sell their property, and occasionally ruin the family outright, rather than not have a fine funeral. Confucius did not enjoin all these foolish excesses, in the fulfilment of an imaginary duty of filial piety, but he did advise people to devote as much as the half of their worldly property to the interment of their parents. The reigning dynasty has endeavoured to check these exorbitant and useless expenses, but the laws made concerning them appear to affect only the Mantchoos; the Chinese continue to follow their ancient customs.

After the body has been placed in the coffin, the relations and friends assemble at certain appointed hours, to weep together, and express their sorrow. We have often been present at these funeral ceremonies, in which the Chinese display with marvellous facility their really astonishing talents for dissimulation. The men and women assemble in separate apartments, and until the time comes at which it is settled they are to grieve, they smoke, drink tea, gossip, laugh, all with such an air of careless enjoyment that you

can hardly persuade yourself that they are really supposed to be a company of mourners. But when the ceremony is about to begin, the nearest relation informs the assembly that the time has come, and they go and place themselves in a circle round the coffin. On this signal the noisy conversation that has been going on suddenly ceases, the lamentations begin, and the faces but now so gay and good-humoured instantly assume the most doleful and lugubrious expression.

The most pathetic speeches are addressed to the dead; every one speaks his own monologue on the subject, interrupted by groans and sobs, and, what is most extraordinary, inconceivable indeed, by tears, — yes, actually real true tears, and plenty of them.

One would suppose they were unconsolable in their grief — and yet they are nothing more than skilful actors — and all this sorrow and lamentation is only a display of histrionic talent. At a given signal the whole scene changes abruptly, the tears dry up, the performers do not even stop to finish a sob or a groan, but they take their pipes, and lo, there are again these incomparable Chinese, laughing, gossipping, and drinking tea. Certainly no one could guess that, instead of drinking hot tea, they had but a moment before been shedding hot tears.

When the time comes for the women to range themselves round the coffin, the dramatic piece is, if possible, played with still greater perfection. The grief has such an appearance of sincerity, the sighs are so agonising, the tears so abundant, the voice so broken by sobs, that actually, in spite of your certainty that the whole affair is a purely fictitious representation, you can hardly help being affected at it.

The Chinese do not fail to turn to account in many circumstances this astonishing talent for going distracted in cold blood, and pouring from their eyes a quantity of water, so-called tears, that come from one knows not where. What is also very strange is, that, although they are all acquainted with these insinuating artifices, they are sometimes caught by them, and reciprocally cheated. It is, however, with strangers that they obtain their most brilliant successes. Missionaries newly arrived in China, who have not yet had time to become acquainted with their wonderfully flexible natures, capable of taking by turns, and at will, the expression of the most opposite sentiments, imagine they have to do with people of the profoundest sensibility, the most impressible in the world; but they soon discover that the tears of the Chinese are no more to be relied on than their words, and are for

the most part purely fictitious. Cordiality and sincerity are qualities rare indeed among the Chinese.

The rich inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, it is almost needless to say, make an exorbitant display at funerals. They invite as many relations and friends as they can, in order to muster an imposing procession, and the mourning dresses worn by the whole party are at the cost of the family of the deceased, who are also bound to provide them for several days together with splendid repasts. A great number of musicians are hired for the occasion, and also of *weepers*, for though most people in China are, as we have said, pretty well skilled in the art of shedding tears, there exist mourners, by profession, who have carried it to still greater perfection, and are absolutely inimitable at sobs and groans. They follow the coffin in long white robes, hempen girdles, and dishevelled hair; and their lamentations are accompanied by the beating of gongs, by the sharp and discordant sounds of rude instruments of music, and the discharge of fireworks. The sudden explosion and the smell of the powder are supposed to be efficacious in frightening away the demons and hindering them from seizing on the soul of the defunct, which never fails to follow the coffin; and as these malevolent spirits have also the reputation of being extremely covetous, and fond of money, people endeavour to get on their weak side. They let fall, for this purpose, all along the road, sapecks and bank-notes, that the wind carries away in all directions; and as the demons in China are by no means as cunning as the men, they are taken in by this device, and fall into the trap with charming simplicity, though the supposed bank-notes are in fact only bits of white paper. Whilst they are engaged in pursuing these deceitful appearances of riches, the soul of the defunct proceeds quietly and comfortably after its coffin without any danger of being stopped by the way.

The sceptical Chinese are in general quite willing to dispense with the attendance of Bonzes, or Tao-sse, at their funerals. Not having felt any need of religion during their lives, they argue, very logically, that they certainly do not want it after they are dead. The disciples of Confucius especially could hardly admit the necessity of offering prayers and sacrifices for the departed, when they profess to believe that man dies altogether, that the soul vanishes as well as the body, and falls into nothingness. But the Bonzes, nevertheless, are occasionally invited to funerals, on account of the greater pomp that their presence confers. We witnessed ourselves, in the environs of Pekin, the funeral of a great dignitary of the Empire, at which were present all the Bonzes,

Lamas, and Tao-sse that could be collected from the whole country round, and they each said their own prayers, and performed their own ceremonies. It was a realisation of the famous formula, San-kiao-y-kiao—the three religions are one.

The Chinese are in the habit of offering viands, and sometimes splendid banquets to their dead; and these are served before the coffin, as long as the body is kept in the family, and on the tomb after the burial.

What idea is really in the minds of the Chinese on the subject of this practice? Many people have thought and written that the souls of the departed are supposed to take pleasure in regaling themselves with the subtle and delicate parts, the essences as they might be called, of the dishes offered to them; but it seems to us that the Chinese are far too intelligent to carry absurdity to such a point as this. The masses, no doubt, observe these practices quite mechanically, without ever thinking of the meaning of them; but for those who are in the habit of reflecting upon what they do, it is impossible to believe they can delude themselves so grossly.

How, for instance, could the Confucians, who believe the complete annihilation of both soul and body, suppose that the dead come back to eat? One day we asked a Mandarin, a friend of ours, who had just offered a sumptuous repast at the tomb of a deceased colleague, whether, in his opinion, the dead stood in need of food?

"How could you possibly suppose I had such an idea?" he replied, with the utmost astonishment. "Could you really suppose me so stupid as that?"

"But what then is the purpose of these mortuary repasts?"

"We intend to do honour to the memory of our relations and friends; to show that they still live in our remembrance, and that we like to serve them as if they were yet with us. Who could be absurd enough to believe that the dead need to eat? Amongst the lower classes, indeed, many fables are current, but who does not know that rude ignorant people are always credulous?"

We are inclined to think that all tolerably well informed Chinese, a little accustomed to reflection, would be of the same opinion as this Mandarin, with respect to the practices to which the multitude may possibly attach superstitious ideas.

The worship of ancestors, which formerly occasioned such long and deplorable disputes between the Jesuit missionaries and the Dominicans, may, perhaps, be regarded in the same light as the offerings to the dead. The Chinese have always been in the habit

of reserving in the interior of their houses an apartment dedicated to the honour of their forefathers. Among the princes, the great Mandarins, and all who are rich enough to have numerous chambers in their houses, it is a kind of domestic sanctuary, in which are kept tablets inscribed with the names of ancestors, from him who is counted as the founder of the family, down to the most recently dead. Sometimes there is only the name of the founder, as he is supposed to represent all the others. To this sanctuary the members of the family go to perform certain ceremonies prescribed by the Rites; to burn perfumes, present offerings, and make prostrations. They go there also whenever there is any important enterprise in agitation, any favour received, or any misfortune suffered. They go, in fact, to inform their ancestors of whatever of good or evil happens to their descendants. The poor, and those who have no more room in their houses than is strictly necessary to lodge the living, merely put their ancestors in a corner of their room, or on a shelf. Formerly, even in time of war, the general had in his tent a place set apart for the tablets of his ancestors, and at the commencement of a siege, on the eve of a battle, or whenever any important event seemed impending, he proceeded, at the head of his principal officers, to prostrate himself before the tablets, and make to his ancestors a report concerning the situation of his affairs.

These customs were tolerated by some of the missionaries, who saw in them merely acts of civil homage rendered to the memory of the dead; but they were severely reproved by others, who found in these ceremonies all the characteristics of idolatrous worship. Thence arose those lamentable contests which at this epoch so completely paralysed the missions. The question was really difficult of solution. Neither the partisans nor the opponents of the rites practised in honour of ancestors and of Confucius, doubted that their opinion was supported by irrefragable proofs; the quarrel became embittered, and it seemed as if, henceforward, peace and harmony would no longer exist among these infant Christian communities. But Rome, that tribunal sovereign and infallible in the eyes of every good Catholic, cut short the dispute, condemned the worship of ancestors and of Confucius, and took effectual measures to prevent the recurrence of these unfortunate dissensions, that had proved more injurious to the missions in China than the violent persecutions of the Mandarins.

The ordinary duration of mourning for a father or mother is three years; but this has been reduced to twenty-seven months for the functionaries of the Government. During this time of

mourning, a Chinese cannot perform the duties of any public office. A Mandarin is obliged to quit his post, a minister of state to renounce the administration of affairs, and live wholly in retirement. He must pay no visits, and his official relations with the world are completely suspended. Once at least every year he must perform a commemorative ceremony at the tombs of his ancestors, in which all the descendants of the family, men, women, and children, take part. They clean the place of burial, and, after having decorated the ground with numerous cuttings of coloured paper, they make the prostrations prescribed by the ceremonial, burn perfumes, and deposit on the turf or the tombstone little vases, containing more or less exquisite culinary dainties. However profound may be the scepticism of the modern Chinese, it is probable that these practices were once based upon some kind of belief in a future life. "Almost all men," says Bossuet, "sacrifice to the manes, that is, the souls of their ancestors, by which we see how ancient is the faith in the immortality of the soul, and that it may be classed among the earliest traditions of the human race."

In all these ordinances concerning funerals, mourning sacrifices before the tablets, and at the tombs of ancestors, it is easy to see the consecration of the one grand principle of filial piety, which is the basis of Chinese society. There are, indeed, scarcely any customs that, when closely looked into, will not be seen to tend to the inculcation of respect for paternal authority in the minds of the people. This purpose is also especially evident in the numerous ceremonies connected with marriage. We will enter into some details concerning this matter, and it will be seen what an immense part paternal power plays in the laws and manners of the Empire.

It is an indisputable fact that in China fathers and mothers, or, in their absence, grand-parents, or, in fact, the nearest relations, have a completely arbitrary authority over young persons in the affairs of marriage, from which they cannot withdraw themselves. The Chinese now marry very young, though this appears to be contrary to the usages of antiquity, and the prescriptions of the Book of Rites. This canonical book establishes in the following manner the division of the ages of man: —

"Man, at the age of ten, has a brain as weak as his body, and can at most only apply to the first elements of the sciences. Man at twenty has not yet his full strength; he scarcely perceives the first rays of reason. Nevertheless, as he begins to be a man, one ought to allow him the manly hat. At thirty, man is truly

man; robust and vigorous; and this is the age that is suitable for marriage. To a man of forty, small magistracies may be entrusted; and to a man of fifty, the most difficult and extensive employments. At sixty, men grow old, and little remains to them but prudence without vigour, so that they ought not to do anything themselves, but merely to say what they wish to have done. A man of seventy, whose strength of mind and body is exhausted, should leave domestic cares to his children. The decrepit age is that of eighty or ninety years; men at that time of life are like children, no longer subject to the laws; and if they reach a hundred, they need occupy themselves with nothing more than in fanning the feeble flame of life that yet remains to them."

According to the Book of Rites, therefore, venerable antiquity was of opinion that the age of thirty was the most suitable for marriage; but the Chinese at the present day — more precocious, probably — have abandoned this ancient custom. Nothing is more common than to arrange a marriage during the infancy of the parties, or even before their birth. Two friends make a solemn promise, or even take an oath, to unite in marriage the children of different sexes that may be born to them; and the solemnity of the engagement is marked by their tearing reciprocally a piece out of their tunics, and giving it to each other. Marriages contracted in this manner cannot, of course, be founded on congeniality of character; this can seldom happen, as the parties have not usually seen each other beforehand; the will of the parent being the sole reason for the formation of the nuptial tie.

In a Chinese marriage, not only does the bride bring with her no dower, but her parents expect to receive a sum of money, which is stipulated for in advance. One part of it is paid as earnest money as soon as the contract is signed; the other, some days before the celebration of the wedding. Besides this, the parents of the bridegroom make presents to those of the bride of silk stuffs, rice, fruit, wine, &c. If these presents and the earnest money have been received, the contract is concluded, and neither party can draw back. Although the wife has no wedding portion, it is customary for the parents to bestow on her, out of pure liberality, a more or less considerable *trousseau*, and it sometimes happens that the father-in-law sends for the young husband into his house, and constitutes him heir to a portion of his property. But he cannot avoid leaving the rest to some one of his own family and name, who may perform the rites and ceremonies before the tablets of his ancestors. This practice is, in the eyes of the Chinese, of so much importance, that it has even given occasion to adoptions. A man

who has no male descendants adopts, or, rather, buys a child, who afterwards recognises no other parent. It then takes his name, and at his death wears mourning like a son. If it happens that the father has children of his own after the adoption, it still remains in force, and the adopted child has a right to an equal portion of the property with the other children.

All marriages are made by mediators for both parties, who undertake gratuitously all the negotiations and preparations. It is even considered as an honour to fulfil such a delicate duty.

Polygamy is not, we believe, really a legal institution in China. Formerly, it was only permitted to Mandarins and men of forty years of age who had no children, to take secondary, or, as the phrase is, "little wives." The Book of Rites even prescribes the punishments to be inflicted for the transgression of this law. "A man guilty of concubinage," it says, "shall be punished with a hundred blows on the shoulders." But these laws subsist only in the books, and a man may, in fact, take a secondary wife whenever he pleases. His fancy has no other limits to observe than those of his fortune, and does not always observe even those.

But whatever may be the number of secondary wives, there can never be but one legitimate spouse, who is the mistress of the house, and to whom all the others are subordinate.

The children born of these secondary wives acknowledge the legitimate one only as their mother; wear mourning for her instead of their real mother, and lavish on her all their expressions of respect, affection, and obedience. The secondary wife is so entirely inferior and dependent, that she must obey the lawful wife in everything; and she never calls the head of the house by any other name than that of father of the family.

The secondary wife is never permitted to abandon her husband for any cause whatever. She is simply the property of him who has purchased her; but the husband may repudiate her, drive her out of his house, or sell her if he thinks proper; there is no law to forbid it. "If," says the code, "a man shall send away his lawful wife without reason, the law will oblige him to take her back again, and he shall receive eighty blows of the stick;" but the law says nothing of the "little wife," and this silence authorises the Chinese to treat her according to his caprice.

When the Chinese contracts a lawful marriage he is perfectly aware that he is forming an indissoluble tie, and the written laws of the Empire are in harmony with the general conviction. They impose severe punishments on married persons who openly neglect their duties. They admit indeed of divorce in several cases, but

all legislation on this subject is wholly in favour of the husband. As in all pagan societies, the woman is always the slave or victim of the man. The law seldom troubles itself about her, but if ever it does mention her, it is but to remind her of the inferiority of her condition, and that she is only in this world to obey and to suffer.

Amongst the obstacles to marriage recognised by the law, there are some rather remarkable ones which concern magistrates. A Mandarin, for example, is forbidden to form an alliance in the province where he holds any public employment. If a civil Mandarin (military officers are exempt) marries or even takes a secondary wife in the country where he is magistrate, he is condemned to eighty blows with the stick, and the marriage is declared null and void. If he marry the daughter of a man concerned in a lawsuit that he is to decide, the number of strokes is doubled, and in these two cases, the mediators receive the same punishment. The woman is sent back to her parents, and the nuptial presents are confiscated to the public treasury. We will not enter into long details of the ceremonies and formalities observed in the celebration of marriage. There are six principal rites, but they are all observed only among families of importance; the greater part of them are dispensed with among people of inferior condition. The first rite consists in agreeing on the alliance; the second, in asking the name of the young lady, and the month and day of her birth, for Chinese etiquette requires that she should be, at this stage of the treaty, absolutely unknown to her future husband; the third thing to be done, is to consult diviners concerning the result of the marriage, and to report a happy augury to the parents of the girl; the fourth to offer silk stuffs and other presents, as pledges of the intention to form the connexion; the fifth to appoint the wedding day; and the sixth to go and meet the bride, and conduct her to the house of her husband. The accomplishment of these rites is accompanied in both families by a crowd of minute observances from which no one would dare to depart. The formula of the missives that they address to each other, the words that they employ, the particular salutations to be used, all is previously determined, according to the rules of the most exquisite politeness. The part, however, which is played in all these ceremonies by the family of the bride, must always wear a certain stamp of deference and modesty. Thus, when the name of his daughter is asked, the father is required to answer in the following manner: — "I have received with respect the marks of your goodness. The choice that you deign to make of my daughter to become the wife of

your son, shows me that you esteem my *poor and cold family* more than it deserves. My daughter is coarse and stupid, and I have not had the talent to bring her up well; yet I shall nevertheless glory in obeying you on this occasion. You will find written on another page the name of my daughter, and that of her mother, with the day of her birth." When he receives the presents, and the information that a day is fixed for the wedding, the father replies in these terms:—"I have received your last resolution. You wish this marriage to take place, and I am only sorry that my daughter has so little merit, and that she has not had all the education desirable. I fear she is good for nothing, yet nevertheless, since the augury is favourable, I dare not disobey you. I accept your present, I salute you, and I consent to the day appointed for the wedding. I will take care to make due preparation."

On the day marked for the celebration, the bridegroom puts on a magnificent dress, and when the family has assembled in the domestic sanctuary, he kneels down, and prostrates his face to the ground. Perfumes are then burnt before the tablets of ancestors, and the important event is announced to them. The master of the ceremonies then invites the father to take a place on the seat prepared for him. As soon as he is seated, the bridegroom receives on his knees a cup of wine, of which he first pours a few drops on the earth by way of libation, and before drinking makes four genuflexions before his father; afterwards he advances towards the seat, and receives the commands of his father in a kneeling posture. The father says: "Go, my son, go and seek your wife, and behave in all things with prudence and wisdom." The son, prostrating himself four times before his father, replies that he will obey; after which he enters a palanquin that is already waiting at the door. His friends, and a numerous array of attendants, march before him, bearing lanterns of the most brilliant colours, a custom that arose at a time when it was usual to celebrate marriages in the night. When he has reached the house of the bride, the bridegroom waits at the gate of the second court until his father-in-law comes to introduce him.

In the house of the bride similar ceremonies are observed. After the libation and the drinking of the cup of wine, the bride kneels down before her father, who exhorts her to obey faithfully the commands of her father and mother-in-law, and then the mother places a garland on her head, whence hangs a large veil that covers her face. "Take courage, daughter," she says, "and be always submissive to the will of your husband."

They then proceed solemnly to meet the bridegroom, who is waiting at the entrance of the second court. The procession ad-

vances, and when it has reached the middle of the court, the bridegroom kneels down, and offers a wild duck to his father-in-law, which the master of the ceremonies carries to the bride. At length the bridal pair meet for the first time; and they salute each other very gravely, making a profound inclination, and then they kneel down together "to adore the heavens and the earth." It would seem that this act is the essential point of the ceremony, and in some measure the symbol of the conjugal tie. When they wish to express that any one is married, they commonly say, "he has adored the heavens and the earth."

After they have remained a short time on their knees, the bride is conducted to a palanquin covered with rose-coloured silk; the bridegroom also enters his palanquin, and the procession moves away, considerably augmented in number, for besides the lantern-bearers aforesaid, there come now people carrying beds, chairs, tables, and all kinds of household utensils. When it has once more reached the house of the bridegroom he alights, and invites his bride to enter, but marches before her to the interior court, where the nuptial feast is prepared. Then the bride raises her veil and salutes her husband, and he salutes her in his turn, and they both wash their hands, the husband on the north, the wife on the south side of the portico. Before sitting down to table the wife makes four genuflexions before her husband, who responds with two to her, and they sit down opposite one another. Before eating and drinking, they make a libation with wine, and put aside some viands to be offered to the ancestors.

They then taste of some of the dishes in profound silence; the husband rises, invites his wife to drink, and sits down again, and the wife performs the same ceremony with respect to her husband, and at the same time two full cups of wine are brought, of which they drink a part, and then put what remains into one cup to drink it between them. The father of the bridegroom in the meantime is giving his friends a grand banquet in a neighbouring apartment, and the mother of the bride another to the women invited. For them the entire day is one long festival, in which the time passes with a little more spirit and gaiety, than it does with the newly-married pair.

On the following day, the wife, clothed in her bridal attire, and accompanied by her husband, and a mistress of the ceremonies, carrying two pieces of silk stuff, goes into the second court of the house, in which her father and mother-in-law are seated at separate tables, awaiting her visit.

The newly-married pair salute them and make four prostrations

before them, after which the husband retires into a neighbouring apartment, and the wife makes her offerings. The rest of the day and several following ones are employed in paying visits. The wife has to pay her respects to all the relations of her husband, and perform genuflexions before them; and the husband to present himself in the same manner to the relations of his wife.

Such is, briefly, the ceremonial of a Chinese marriage; and we have observed that every one in China professes great respect for this solemn act of a man's life. When a marriage procession, be it of rich or poor people, passes by, you must stand aside for it; even Mandarins of the highest rank stop, with all their attendants, and if they are on horseback, politeness requires them to descend, and do honour to the newly-married pair.

It appears somewhat unnecessary to add that Chinese marriages are seldom happy, and peace and harmony do not often reign in the interior of a family. Without mentioning the numerous causes of jealousy and discord that must arise from the presence of several secondary wives in the same house, it must evidently be a surprising chance if a pair, who have never seen each other before marriage, should really prove congenial. Incompatibility of character frequently manifests itself soon enough, and thence arises aversion and even sometimes bitter hatred. Perpetual quarrels, conflicts, and even sanguinary battles, take place, in which the woman is almost always the sufferer. Privations of every kind, and of every day; invectives, curses; from time to time also blows; these are her heritage, which she must endure with patience. In some parts of the country it is so much the fashion to beat a wife, that a man would hardly like not to follow it, as to show himself negligent on this point would be to forfeit his marital dignity and proclaim himself a simpleton, who understood nothing of his prerogatives.

One day we were witnesses of a terrible scene in a Chinese family that we knew intimately. On coming in we found a numerous party assembled round a young woman, who appeared on the point of yielding her last breath. A few days before she had been the very image of health, but now she was scarcely recognisable, her face was so bruised and covered with blood. She could not move or speak, but her eyes streaming with tears, and the violent beating of her heart, indicated too well what she was suffering. We asked for some explanation of this heartrending spectacle. "It is her husband," said the bystanders, "who has brought the poor creature to this state." The husband was standing there gloomy, silent, almost stupified, his eyes fixed upon his unfortunate victim.

"What motive," said we, "could possibly have urged you to

such a dreadful excess? What crime has your wife committed to be treated in this way?"

"None, none!" he cried, in a voice broken by sobs. "She never deserved any punishment; we have only been married two years, and you know we have always lived in peace. But for some days I have had something on my mind. I thought people were laughing at me, because I had never beaten my wife; and this morning I gave way to a bad thought." And the young man, whom we could never have suspected of such a piece of insanity, abandoned himself to tardy and useless remorse. Two days afterwards the poor woman, who had always been an angel of goodness, expired in terrible convulsions.

In some cases, pecuniary interest is the only motive capable of restraining within some limits the harshness of the Chinese towards their wives. When they do treat them with gentleness and moderation, it is usually on a principle of economy, as you might spare a beast of burden because it costs money, and because if you killed it, you would have to replace it. This hideous calculation is by no means a mere supposition of ours. In a large village to the north of Pekin, we were once witnesses of a violent quarrel between a husband and wife. After having for a long time abused each other in the most furious manner, and even hurled at each other some tolerably inoffensive projectiles, their anger still increasing, they began to break everything in the house. Several of the neighbours tried in vain to restrain them, and at length the husband seizing a great paving-stone from the court-yard, rushed furiously into the kitchen, where the wife was expending her wrath upon the crockery, and strewing the floor with the ruins. When the husband rushed in with the paving-stone, everybody hurried forward to prevent a calamity that seemed imminent—there was no time—but the fellow dashed his paving-stone, not against his wife, fortunately, but against his great cast-iron kettle, which he stove in with the blow. The wife could not outdo this piece of extravagance, and so the quarrel ceased. A man who was standing by, then said, laughing, to the husband, "You are a fool, my elder brother; why didn't you break your wife's head with the stone instead of your kettle? Then you would have had peace in your house."

"I thought of that," replied the kind husband coolly; "but it would have been foolish. I can get my kettle mended for two hundred sapecks, and it would have cost me a great deal more to buy another wife." Such an answer will not be in the least surprising to any one who knows the Chinese.

The women of the Celestial Empire are so unfortunate, that in many places their sufferings in this life have suggested to them the hope of a future one. It is most painful to see these poor victims of a sceptical and corrupt civilisation, vainly struggling amidst their sufferings to find some consolation, and, for want of a knowledge of Christianity, throwing themselves into the extravagances of the metempsychosis. They have formed a sect called the "Abstinents," which is increasing rapidly in the southern provinces. The women who enrol themselves in this sisterhood make a vow to eat neither meat nor fish, nor anything that has had life, but to live wholly on vegetables. They think that after death their souls will migrate into another body, and that if they have been faithful to their vows of abstinence, they will have the happiness to return to life as men. The hope of obtaining such an advantage supports them under their daily mortifications, and enables them to endure the troubles and hardships they have to suffer from the other sex. They promise themselves, doubtless, ample compensation after their metamorphosis; and it would not be, perhaps, a very hazardous conjecture, that some of them enjoy a little the idea of the vengeance they will take on their husbands, when they shall be transformed into women.

At various periods of the year this sisterhood goes in procession to certain pagodas. We have met them several times, and it was truly pitiable to see the poor women, leaning on sticks, and hobbling along on their little goat's feet, to make long pilgrimages, in the hope that after their death they will be able to take a good revenge on the men for all their present wrongs.

CHAP. XVII.

Departure from the Capital of Hou-pé. — Farewell Visit to the Governor of the Town. — Burial of the two Martyrs. — State of Christianity in Hou-pé. — Disagreeable Incidents on the Road. — No Provisions in a Town of the third Order. — Visit to the Palace of the Town Prefect. — Treatment of Criminals. — Horrible Details of a Trial. — The Kouan-kouen, or Chinese Bandit. — Mode of administering Justice. — Code of Laws. — General Considerations upon Chinese Legislation. — Penal and materialistic Character of the Code. — Defect of Precision in certain Laws. — Principle of Solidarity. — Laws relating to Officers of Government. — Organisation of the Family. — Repression of Crime. — Ritual Laws. — Taxes and territorial Property.

After four days' rest in the Garden of the Western Gate, we began to think of resuming our seemingly interminable journey.

We felt our strength and courage nearly exhausted, and we had still nearly nine hundred miles to travel, and that during the hottest season of the year, and constantly in a southerly direction. But trusting in the protection of Providence, we did not doubt of arriving some day safe and sound at Macao.

The preparations for our departure were made; our old palanquins, somewhat disfigured by the dust, and calcined by the scorching of the sun, were varnished and furbished up anew; the new escort was regularly organised under the command of Master Lieou, the "Weeping Willow," and our domestic Wei-chan had begun the education of our future travelling companions. He had insinuated to them, in his picturesque and figurative language, that it would be necessary for them to bend often, in order not to graze themselves against certain angular points in our character.

Before finally quitting the capital of Hou-pé, we went to salute his Excellency the Governor of the province, who received us with ceremonious politeness. His language and manners had nothing of the benevolence and affability that had excited a feeling of love for the venerable and excellent Pao-hing, the Viceroy of the province of Sse-tchouen. On our side, we contented ourselves with behaving courteously, and strictly observing the regulations of the ritual. "Travel in peace," said he, waiving his hand. "Remain seated in tranquillity," we responded, and with a bow, not very profound, we departed.

We had not quitted the large and populous town of Ou-tchang-fou, at the utmost, above an hour, when we entered a mountainous country, of which the soil was of a reddish colour, and furrowed in all directions by narrow paths. We had a vague recollection of having seen it before, and on consideration we thought we must have passed through some of the windings of its numerous hills when, in the beginning of the year 1840, we had for the first time, and in a furtive manner, traversed the Chinese Empire. This remembrance plunged us into a sweet though sad reverie, and in order to be quite sure that we were not mistaken, we inquired of one of the palanquin bearers what was the name of the country we were traversing? *Houng-chan*, he replied, "the Red Mountain." Yes, that was it! That name was profoundly impressed on our memory!

In passing along a narrow road bordered with thorny shrubs, that were interlaced by numerous climbing plants, we perceived at a little distance, on the declivity of a hill, two modest tombstones, placed side by side. The sight filled our hearts with emotion, and our eyes with tears. Beneath these two stones re-

pose the precious remains of two spiritual sons of St. Vincent de Paul the venerable Clet and Perboyre, martyred for the faith, the one in 1822, the other in 1839. Oh, how great a consolation would it have been to have stopped for awhile, to have knelt, to have prostrated ourselves by these family tombs, and have kissed the ground consecrated by the blood of these martyrs, and prayed to God, in the name of these strong-hearted men, these heroes of the faith, for a little of the intrepidity that is always necessary amidst the tribulations of the world! for whatever may be the part that the will of God has assigned to us here below, we are all children of Calvary, and have need of some portion of the martyr's spirit.

Prudence, however, did not permit us to stop. There would have been danger in pointing out this sacred treasure to the numerous persons who accompanied us.

In 1840, when we visited these dear tombs, we were alone with a young Christian of Ou-tchang-fou, who served us for a guide, and this is what we wrote at the time to our brethren in France: —

"The precious remains of MM. Clet and Perboyre repose side by side on a green hill, at a short distance from the town of Ou-tchang-fou. Oh, how delightful was the hour I passed near these simple but covered mounds. Upon an idolatrous soil, in the midst of the Chinese Empire, a feeling of rapturous happiness hitherto unknown seemed to fill and dilate my soul. No chiselled marble covers the bones of these two glorious children of St. Vincent de Paul, but God Himself seems to have undertaken the care of their mausoleum. Parasitical plants and thorny shrubs, resembling the acacia, grow around it; and above the carpet of verdure that covers it, rise in elegant profusion the beautiful blossoms of the mimosa. As we contemplated these brilliant flowers, escaping from a thick network of thorns, we thought involuntarily of the glory with which the sufferings of martyrs are crowned in heaven."

The two tombs were exactly in the same state as when we left them: both the stones and their inscriptions appeared to us to be untouched; only the season for the flowers was past, and the mimosas no longer displayed their bright corollas amidst the leaves. The grass too was withered up, but some stalks of the wild bind-weed, stript of its leaves, crept from one tomb to the other, as if to form a bond between them.

Let us hope that the blood of martyrs, formerly such good seed for Christianity, may not have lost its fertilising power in China. This land has been doubtless hitherto deplorably sterile; but when

the hour comes, the hour appointed by Him who is able "from the very stones to raise up children to Abraham," we may see this adamantine soil soften, and bring forth countless worshippers of Jesus.

The state of Christianity in Hou-pé is not so flourishing as in the province of Sse-tchouen. At most there are not in it more than 12,000 or 14,000 Christians — most of them poor, and belonging to the lower classes of society.

The frequent and violent persecutions that have harassed this province may perhaps account for this slow progress of the faith; and the small numbers of the Christians, and the continual vexations they have to endure from the Mandarins, contribute to render them timid, and to repress the ardour and energy necessary for proselytism. While travelling over this province, we always noticed that the Christians kept themselves concealed; they did not dare to show themselves on our passage, we did not receive any visits from them at the Communal Palaces, at most we could only discover them here and there, by their making stealthily the sign of the cross, in order to let us know who they were. We saw no signs of the spirit and activity so perceptible at the missions of Sse-tchouen, and which denoted a more lively faith, or at all events a more ardent zeal for the conversion of the infidels.

The mission of Hou-pé is at present confided to the care of Italian missionaries, under the direction of Monseigneur Rizzolatti, Vicar Apostolic, who has been many years in the missions of China. Under the influence of his long experience, the vicariate of Hou-pé had considerably increased, when unfortunately a persecution separated the pastor from his flock. M. Rizzolatti was arrested, and sent to the English colony at Hong-Kong, where he is now waiting till circumstances shall appear sufficiently favourable to permit him, without imprudence, to return to the bosom of his mission.

We travelled the whole day, through a country intersected by hills and ravines, and apparently little adapted to cultivation; we saw few villages, only here and there a few scattered houses and farms, where, by dint of patience and industry, a few families contrive to obtain some small return from the barren soil. Before sunset we arrived at the banks of the Blue River, which we had to cross in order to reach a market-town situated on the opposite side. The road that we followed on leaving Ou-tchang-fou ran towards the North-East, and took us farther off Canton, but we were compelled to proceed by this circuitous way to avoid a number of little lakes that would every moment have barred our

passage. It was necessary also to take the Imperial road, that would afterwards lead us directly to the capital of Kiang-si. We might have embarked at Ou-tchang-fou, and gone down the Blue River, as far as the great lake Pou-yang, but as that was the season of inundation and tempests, the administration had considered it prudent to send us by land. The route was longer and less agreeable, but there was no fear of shipwreck. After having crossed the Blue River, we halted at a large village, the name of which we have forgotten, but this is no great matter, for we have nothing to say in its favour. We found bad lodgings, a bad supper, and, into the bargain, a frightful quantity of mosquitoes, and a large ill-smelling insect, of the order *coleoptera*, called the *kakkerlac* *, which abounds in the warm countries of China, and delights in gnawing the tips of your ears and toes while you sleep.

We were mostly lodged and fed in a deplorable manner, as long as we continued on this cross-road. The Mandarins in their journeys usually follow the course of the Blue River; and the local administration has not, as elsewhere, erected Communal Palaces from stage to stage, to receive the public functionaries.

We were obliged to lodge at miserable inns—ill kept, and unspeakably dirty—where we had the greatest difficulty in procuring just enough to prevent our dying of hunger. Our conductors did whatever they could for us; the Weeping Willow, who had promised to render our lives so delightful, so poetical, as long as we remained under his care, vainly gave orders to his subordinates—order what he would, his orders produced only the poorest results. He was excessively distressed, at least we certainly thought his eyes poured out tears more abundantly than usual, but our servant, Wei-chan, was not tearful but furious. As we had kept him in hopes of his being able to manage our affairs well, he felt his honour hurt, and his reputation compromised whenever we did not find, as in Sse-tchouen, a superb Communal Palace, with a splendid banquet ready for us. He got into a passion every moment, insulted the innkeepers, and cursed the whole province of Hou-pé. To hear him, you would have thought the whole town or village deserved to be burnt down, and the inhabitants to be set in the Cangue, or exiled to the end of Bucharia. We were obliged more than once to moderate the extravagance of his zeal, and show him that though we had thought proper to be energetic in claiming our rights, we could also be patient when circumstances required

* This insect is of the genus *Blatta;* and as there is, we believe, no English name for it, we have adopted that used by the Dutch and by sailors. The French name is *Cancrelat.* — Tr.

it, and that there was no reason to attribute ill-will to any one. Wei-chan listened attentively to our sermon, but that did not hinder him rating everybody he came in contact with. The day before we arrived at the Imperial road, we reached towards noon a town of the third order, called Kouang-tsi-hien. We were conducted to a tolerably good-looking house, that reminded us a little of the Communal Palaces, and we were expatiating in a cool pleasant garden, beneath the broad leaves of a thick grove of bananas, when the Weeping Willow came towards us, and gazing at us mournfully through his tears and his spectacles, uttered these interesting words: "The guardian of the establishment is only charged to lodge us; the Tribunal told him that he need not provide any victuals."

"The authorities of the town, then, will attend to us; they will, doubtless, send us dinner from the Tribunal."

"By no means; they told me the Tribunal would have nothing to do with feeding us."

"Who, then, is to undertake it?"

"Nobody!" cried the Willow, piteously, extending his right hand towards us, while with the left he wiped his eyes with a bit of white linen.

"Nobody?" cried we, too, starting up from our seats; "send for our palanquin-bearers, and let them take us to the Prefect of the town."

The Weeper, who was not accustomed to our diplomatic proceedings, was seized with fright, but Wei-chan calmed his fears by telling him that we had behaved in this way all along the road, and that no harm had ever come of it.

The palanquin-bearers arrived, according to order, and we set off for the Prefect's palace. We had desired our men not to stop at the outer gate, but to march boldly in, and our orders were punctually obeyed; but the porter, noticing this unusual mode of entrance into the Tribunal, ran after us to ask where we were going.

"To speak to the Prefect."

"The Prefect is sitting in judgment; there is a trial of the first importance."

We thought this was only a pretext to prevent our entrance, and we therefore insisted upon going in.

"At least," said the porter, "give me your visiting card, and I will go and announce you."

In the fear that the Prefect would not see us if we did, we replied to the porter, that we were not subject to the rites of the Empire, and that we would announce ourselves. We then made

a sign to the bearers to go on, and we soon reached the interior court, immediately before the entrance of the principal hall. This court was so full of people, that we thought it probable the first magistrate of the town really was engaged as we had been told. A subaltern officer of the Palace also came up to us just as we alighted from our palanquins, and assured us that the Prefect was then sitting in judgment on a criminal trial. We hesitated for a moment, not knowing very well what to do, whether to return home, or to make our way into the hall where the trial was going on. As we did not at all like having come for nothing, and were moreover somewhat curious to see what was going on, we put aside the crowd and entered.

All eyes were immediately turned towards us, and a movement of surprise was perceptible throughout the assembly. Two men with great beards, yellow caps, and red girdles, formed a very surprising apparition.

For ourselves, at the first glance we cast into the hall, we felt a cold perspiration come over us, and our limbs tottered under us; we were ready to faint. The first object that presented itself on entering this Chinese judgment-hall was the accused — the person on his trial.

He was suspended in the middle of the hall, like one of those lanterns, of whimsical form and colossal dimensions, often seen in the great pagodas. Ropes attached to a great beam in the roof held him tied by the wrists and feet, so as to throw the body into the form of a bow. Beneath him stood five or six executioners, armed with rattan rods and leather lashes, in ferocious attitudes, their clothes and faces spotted with blood — the blood of the unfortunate creature, who was uttering stifled groans, while his flesh was torn almost in tatters. The audience present at this frightful spectacle appeared quite at their ease, and our yellow caps excited much more emotion than the spectacle of torture. Many laughed, indeed, at the horror visible in our faces.

The magistrate, to whom our coming had been hastily announced, rose from his seat as soon as he perceived us, and crossed the hall to meet us. As he passed near the executioners, he had to walk on the tips of his toes, and hold up his beautiful silk robes, that they might not be soiled by the pools of half-coagulated blood with which the floor was covered. He saluted us smilingly, and saying he would suspend the proceedings for a moment, conducted us to a small room situated behind the judge's seat. We sat down, or rather we fell, upon a divan, and were some moments before we could recover our composure.

The Prefect of Kouang-tsi-hien was nearly forty years of age; his features, the tone of his voice, his looks, his manners, all expressed so much mildness and goodness, that we could not recover from our astonishment. It seemed to us impossible that this should be the man who had ordered the frightful measure we had just witnessed; and so strong a feeling of curiosity took possession of us, that we asked whether we might, without indiscretion, put some questions to him concerning the terrible affair he was then engaged in.

"On the contrary," he replied, "I should myself desire that you should understand the nature of this trial. You appear to me astonished at the extreme severity I have shown towards the criminal; the torture he is enduring has moved you to compassion. The emotions that agitated your hearts on your entrance into the hall mounted to your faces and became visible to everybody. But this criminal does not merit any consideration; if you knew his conduct, you would certainly not think I was treating him with too much rigour. I am naturally inclined to mildness, and my character is averse from all cruelty. A magistrate, also, must be the father and the mother of his people."

"What great crime, then, has this man committed, to be subjected to so horrible a torture?"

"This man is the chief of a band of ruffians, who for more than a year past have been committing outrages on the Great River, which they were in the habit of traversing night and day in a large boat. He has pillaged a considerable number of merchant junks, and committed more than fifty murders. He has ended by confessing all his crimes, and on this point the truth has been brought to light; but he persists in not denouncing his companions, and I am obliged to employ these extreme methods to reach all the guilty. When one wishes to destroy a tree, it is not sufficient to cut down the trunk, we must tear it up by the roots, otherwise it will sprout forth again."

The magistrate afterwards related to us some abominable atrocities committed by this gang of robbers; of their cutting out the tongues and tearing out the eyes of men, women, and children; of their cutting their prisoners to pieces with circumstances of horrible barbarity; such were the amusements in which these monsters in human form indulged on board their vessels. These details, frightful as they were, did not surprise us. Our long residence in China had taught us to what degree the instinct of evil is developed among these people.

The Prefect of Kouang-tsi-hien, to whom we had briefly ex-

plained the circumstances that had caused us to commit such an indiscretion as to come and trouble him while he was engaged in his official duties, replied that his having been so much occupied with this affair was the sole cause of the negligence we had to complain of. He added, that we might now return to our lodgings, with the certainty that everything should be arranged in conformity with the Rites; but that for himself, he must now resume his seat, and proceed with the trial.

Although it was late, and we had taken nothing that day but a very slight luncheon, we had very little inclination now to sit down to table. What we had seen and heard since we had entered the judgment-hall had been quite sufficient to take away our appetite. We inquired of the Prefect whether there would be any objection to our being present for a little while at the trial; but our request seemed to surprise, and in some measure embarrass him. After a few minutes' reflection he said, "If you come into the hall, I fear your presence will create some disturbance. The people here have never seen men of the Western countries, and if you come in, the officers of the court will hardly attend to their business. However, if you wish it, you shall remain in this room, and from here it will be easy for you to hear and see everything, without yourselves being seen by any one."

He then called an attendant, and desired him to open a large window, and let down a bamboo trellis-work; and whilst we took our places behind this grating, the judge returned to the hall, resumed his seat, and the trial went on, after the attendants, executioners, and officers of the court had cried three times, "Let every one be modest and respectful!"

After having rapidly glanced over some pages of a manuscript that was probably some document connected with the trial, the judge ordered a functionary who stood at his left, to ask the prisoner whether he knew a man named Ly-fang, who formerly carried on the trade of a blacksmith, in a village near a place mentioned.

We have already said that the Mandarins not being allowed to hold office in their own province, are seldom sufficiently acquainted with the idiom of the countries where they are placed, not to need an interpreter whenever they have to address a man of the lower class.

The judge's question was therefore translated to the prisoner, who raised a little his head, which had sunk upon his breast, and casting at the judge a look like that of a wild beast, he replied in an insolent tone, that he had heard speak of him. "Do you know him? Have you had any dealings with him?"

"I have heard speak of him; I do not know him."

"How can that be, when this man remained a long while in your boat? Do you persist in uttering a falsehood? Speak the truth. Do you know Ly-fang?"

"I have heard of him; I do not know him."

The Prefect took up from the table a piece of bamboo wood, and threw it into the middle of the court. A figure was marked upon it, which pointed out the number of blows the prisoner was to receive. One of the executioners picked it up, examined the figure, and cried, in a chanting tone, "Fifteen blows;" that is to say, the criminal would receive thirty — for the executioners always double the number ordered by the judge — and this, multiplied by the number of executioners, furnished a frightful total. There was immediately a stir in the assembly; all eyes were fixed with eager curiosity, sometimes on the miserable prisoner, sometimes on the executioners. Many smiled, and arranged themselves a little more conveniently on their seats, like people about to witness something interesting. The executioners took their places; and soon the body of the criminal was swinging and turning about under a shower of blows, while he uttered terrible shrieks, and his blood spirted out on all sides, and ran down the rattans, reddening the naked arms of the executioners. It was impossible to endure such a spectacle any longer; and we asked one of the officers of the court who had remained with us whether there was not any way of getting out, without crossing the hall. He urged us, however, strongly to await the end of the trial, in order to see, he said, how they managed to unbind the prisoner. But we had seen quite enough; and the officer had the complaisance to lead us back through a long corridor to the gate where our palanquins were waiting.

"This criminal was a famous *kouan-kouen*," said the officer, as he left us; "are there many kouan-kouen in your country?"

"No," we said; "this class of men is unknown among us."

It would not be easy to give a correct translation of this word, kouan-kouen. It is given in China to a race of bandits, who make it a sport and a matter of pride to defy the laws and the magistrates, and commit all kinds of crimes. To give and receive wounds with composure; to kill others with the most perfect coolness; and to have no fear of death for yourself: this is the sublime ideal of the kouan-kouen.

These men are very numerous in China; they form societies among themselves, and stand by each other with immoveable fidelity. Some few live alone, and they are the most ferocious. They regard it as unworthy of their valour to have an associate,

or any support whatever, and they rely on nothing but the energy of their own characters. The audacity of these men is incomparable; the most extravagant and atrocious crimes seem to have for them an irresistible attraction. Sometimes they will even go and denounce themselves to the magistrates from a motive of pride. They confess all their crimes, furnish the most irresistible proofs, and demand condemnation; and then, when all the preparations have been made, and when, according to Chinese law, the confession of the culprit is necessary, they deny all that they have said, and endure with incredible stoicism all kinds of torture. It might really be thought they took a pleasure in having their limbs mangled, provided only that they could enrage the Mandarins and defy the laws. Sometimes they succeed in bringing their judges into difficulties, and even getting them dismissed from their offices; and this is their greatest triumph. In all the towns of China you find numerous collections of little pamphlets, which form in some measure the judicial records and *causes célèbres* of the Empire. They contain dramatic biographies of the most famous kouan-kouen; and as they cost but a few sapecks, they are eagerly bought and read by the people.

The manner of administering justice in China is extremely summary. It may be said, without exaggeration, that there are four times as many judges in France as in the whole Chinese Empire, but this simplification is by no means favourable to the accused, for whom there is scarcely any protection. His fortune and his life depend almost always on the caprice and rapacity of the Mandarins. The ordinary tribunals have only a single judge; and the prisoner remains on his knees during the whole trial; the judge interrogates him; and he alone decides on the value of the answers given. There is no advocate to undertake his defence; his relations and friends are sometimes admitted to plead for him; but that is a pure condescension on the part of the Mandarin, and dependant on his good pleasure. The position of the witnesses is sometimes almost as bad as that of the accused, for if their depositions do not please the judge, they are liable to be cuffed or whipped whenever he pleases, and an executioner, charged with this duty, always stands beside them in case he should be wanted. The accused is absolutely at the mercy of the Mandarin who is to judge him, or rather indeed of the sabaltern officers of the court, who have always drawn up beforehand a statement of the case, favourable or otherwise to the prisoner, according to the money they have received.

Cicero has described, with his energetic eloquence, the mode of proceeding of the infamous Verres, when he held office in Sicily.

"The condemned," he says, "are shut up in prison; the day of their punishment is fixed; but it has already begun in the persons of their unfortunate relatives. Even their children are forbidden to see them; and while the father lies stretched on the ground in his dungeon, they are prevented from bringing him either food or clothing. Desolate mothers have passed whole nights near the fatal gate which prevented them from receiving the last embraces of their children; they have begged as the only favour that they might be permitted to catch the last breath of their sons. But at the gate watches the inexorable jailor, the Prætor's executioner, the terror and death of our citizens and allies, the Lictor Sestius, who levies a tax upon every groan and pang. 'You shall give me,' he says, 'so much to go in; so much to be allowed to buy food;' and no suppliant refuses it. 'And you, how much will you give me for killing your son at a single blow? How much that he may not suffer a long time? How much that I may dispatch him almost without his perceiving it?' And for these frightful services, too, must the Lictor be paid."

It has always seemed to us that Verres must have had some knowledge of Chinese customs, so striking is the resemblance between the proceedings of the Mandarins and those of the above-described Prætor of Sicily.

Every condemned criminal has a right to appeal to the superior tribunals, and carry his cause to the sovereign court at Pekin; but to reach it so many springs must be set in motion, so many influences brought to bear, that most of the causes are finished in the provinces.

Chinese justice is very severe on thieves and disturbers of the public peace. The most ordinary punishments are fines, the bastinado, blows on the face with thick leathern soles, the cangue, or portable pillory, the prison, iron cages where the prisoner must remain in a crouching attitude, perpetual or temporary exile into Tartary, and death by strangulation or decapitation. Rebels are cut in pieces, or mutilated in the most horrible manner. Punishments are mostly inflicted in a hasty and arbitrary way, with the exception of the punishment of death, the sentence for which, with a few rare exceptions, must have the ratification of the Emperor.

There exists in China a code, drawn up with very full details, such as European lawyers would call a *corpus* of Chinese law. It is called Ta-tsing Lu-li, that is to say, Laws and Statutes of the grand dynasty of the Tsing. It has been translated into English by Sir George Staunton under the title of "Penal Code of China,"—a title that does not at first seem quite accurate, as there are many

other things besides criminal law treated of in the course of the work. It is divided into seven portions on the following subjects. 1. General Law; 2. Civil Laws; 3. Fiscal Laws; 4. Ritual Laws; 5. Military Laws; 6. Criminal Laws; 7. Laws concerning public works; but the title of Penal Code, though not literal, is by no means inapplicable.

Those who have observed attentively the manners and institutions of China, have been struck by two things, very fit to attract attention. On the one hand, the generally penal character of the legislation of the Celestial Empire. Every ordinance of the law, every regulation, is made under penal sanction, not only in criminal affairs, but also in matters purely civil. All irregularities, faults of negligence, and so forth, that in European legislation would entail only forfeitures, incapacities, errors, or some slight civil reparation, are punished in China by a certain number of strokes of the bamboo. It might be interesting to inquire into the cause of this curious characteristic of Chinese law. On the other hand, we find all China, with its official religion, its public and private ceremonial, its political institutions, its police and administration, and its vast population of three hundred millions of men, all governed on the one single principle of filial piety before adverted to; a principle that has been extended to the respect due to the Emperor, and his delegates, and which is in reality little else than the worship of ancient institutions.

Chinese civilisation originates in an antiquity so remote that we vainly endeavour to discover its commencement. There are no traces of the state of infancy among this people. This is a very peculiar fact respecting China. We are accustomed in the history of nations to find some well-defined point of departure, and the historic documents, traditions, and monuments that remain to us generally permit us to follow, almost step by step, the progress of civilisation, to be present at its birth, to watch its development, its onward march, and, in many cases, its subsequent decay and fall. But it is not thus with the Chinese. They seem to have been always living in the same stage of advancement as in the present day; and the data of antiquity are such as to confirm that opinion.

It would not be then very rash to conjecture that some mysterious event of the highest importance must have brought the Chinese suddenly to the point at which we find them, and this fact must have left a profound impression on the imagination of the people. Thence may proceed the respect, the veneration, the gratitude felt for the first founders of their ancient monarchy, who conducted them in so rapid a manner to a certain state of enlight-

enment. Thence the worship of ancestors, of all ancient things, of those who hold towards the state the place that the father and mother occupy in the family. The Chinese have in fact always attached the idea of something holy and mysterious to whatever is antique, to all that has existed for ages, and this respect generalised has taken the name of filial piety.

This sentiment, carried to excess, had the necessary consequence of cherishing a sort of exclusive spirit, and a contempt for foreigners, who were regarded as barbarians; and in the second place, a stationary condition of civilisation, which seems to have remained pretty nearly what it was in the beginning.

These reflections enable us to assign to the laws relative to filial piety, political and social, their true importance. As the style is the man, so legislation, which is the style of nations, reflects faithfully the manners, habits, and instincts of the people for and by whom it has been created, and we may say of Chinese legislation, that it represents very accurately the Chinese people.

The inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, being wanting in religious faith, and living from day to day without troubling themselves either about the past or the future, profoundly sceptical, and totally indifferent to what touches only the moral nature of man, having no energy for anything but the amassing of sapecks, cannot, as may easily be supposed, be well induced to obey the laws from a sentiment of duty. The official worship of China does not in fact possess any of the characteristics of what can properly be called a religion, and is, consequently, unable to communicate to the people those moral ideas that do more for the observance of the laws than the most terrible penal sanctions. It is, therefore, quite natural that the bamboo should be the necessary and indispensable accessory of every legal prescription; and the Chinese law will consequently always assume a penal character, even when it has in view objects purely civil.

Whenever a legislature is compelled to be lavish of punishments, it may certainly be affirmed that the social system in which it is in force is vicious; and the Penal Code of China is an illustration of the truth. The punishments awarded by it are not graduated according to the moral gravity of the crime, considered in itself, but merely on the amount of damage that may be occasioned by it. Thus, the punishment of theft is proportional to the value of the object stolen, according to a scale drawn up expressly to that effect, unless the theft be accompanied by circumstances that bring it under some other head. The penal legislation of China is based on the utilitarian principle; and this need not excite any surprise, for Chi-

nese materialism does not consider the act so much in a moral point of view, as with respect to its consequences.

The presence of this utilitarian principle in legislation usually indicates that the social bond is artificial, that it does not rest on the true principles that constitute and preserve nationalities. The immense population of China, depraved by the absence of religious faith and moral education, wholly absorbed in material interests, would not subsist long as a nation, but would be speedily dismembered, were a system of legislation, founded on the principles of absolute justice and right, to be suddenly substituted for the strange one that now governs it. Among a nation of speculators and sceptics, like the Chinese, the social bond is found in the penal, not in the moral law, and the rattan and the bamboo form the sole guarantees for the fulfilment of duty.

And even so far the object would not be attained, did not the Mandarins charged with the execution of the laws find in them the greatest possible latitude. This is what explains the vagueness and want of precision so often observable in the penal code of China. Very often the definition of a crime is so obscure and imperfect, that the law becomes completely elastic in the hands of the Mandarin. It really seems to be made expressly to favour their oppressive, shuffling, dishonest propensities; for in the absence of clear and positive texts, they can always find means of bringing within the category of punishable offences acts which, if not perfectly innocent, are at all events such as can never be subjected to positive laws.

Thus, for example, we find in vol. i., page 274, of the Penal Code, the following article: "When a trader, after having observed the nature of his neighbour's business, stocks his shop, and puts prices on his goods in such a manner that his neighbours cannot sell theirs, and thus obtains more than the customary advantage, he shall be punished with forty strokes of the bamboo."

What tradesman could be out of the reach of the vexations of the Mandarins, with such a clause as this always suspended over his head? And here is another still more odious:—

"Whoever shall observe a line of conduct that offends propriety, and that is contrary to the spirit of the laws, *even without any special infraction of any of their enactments*, shall be punished with forty blows, or eighty, if the impropriety be very great."

These two clauses are sufficient to enable a Mandarin to subject the inhabitants of a whole district to extortion, and to accumulate for himself a handsome fortune in a short time.

But this is not enough; the master-piece of Chinese legislation

is the vast system of responsibility, by which every subject of the Emperor becomes in some measure security for the conduct of his relative or his neighbour, his superior or his inferior. Public functionaries are, as we shall see, principally subject to this terrible responsibility; but private persons are by no means exempt from it. Thus, in each territorial division, composed of a hundred families, there is a head, chosen by his fellow-citizens, along with six others, to watch over the payment of the taxes, and the performance of other public duties. This head is responsible for a crowd of offences that may be committed within his district. When the lands are badly cultivated, the punishment he may incur varies from twenty to eighty strokes, according to the extent of the land in question.

Here is a passage from the first chapter of the second volume :—

"The crime of high treason is that committed either against the State, by overthrowing the established government or endeavouring to do so, or against the Sovereign, by destroying the palace in which he resides, the temple where his family is worshipped, or the tombs in which the remains of his ancestors lie buried, or in endeavouring to do so. All persons who shall be convicted of having committed these execrable crimes, or of having intended to commit them, shall suffer death by a slow and painful method, whether they be principals or accessories. All the male relatives in the first degree of the persons convicted of the above-mentioned crimes — the father, grandfather, and paternal uncles, as well as their sons, grandsons, and sons of their uncles, without any regard being had to their place of abode, or to any natural or accidental infirmities, shall be indiscriminately beheaded. All persons who shall know others guilty of high treason, or individuals having intention to commit such a crime, and who shall connive at the said crime, by not denouncing the authors of it, shall be beheaded."

This frightful kind of responsibility is as revolting to common sense as to the feelings of a Christian; but it is quite natural that it should be in constant and energetic action in China. When we look at the case of a nation, composed of 300,000,000 of men, without any religious faith, and given up exclusively to the chances of speculation, we may conceive that some other than ordinary methods have been found necessary to unite under the same dominion elements so rebellious, and maintain the political unity of these innumerable populations.

And yet all this rigour does not prevent political commotion; on the contrary, the annals of this strange people show that China

is the most revolutionary country in the world. With such systems, in fact, it is impossible to found anything but a factitious kind of order: the least breath is sufficient to compromise the solidity of an edifice so painfully, yet so badly, constructed; but it shows of what the Chinese would have been capable if they had availed themselves of the light that Christianity has diffused so abundantly among the nations of the West. China presents, indeed, an astonishing spectacle; and there is something profoundly mysterious in the ancient civilisation which has been able to resist to this day the flux and reflux of so many revolutions, and to save itself from total ruin, in spite of the instability of its foundation, the defective morality of its citizens, and the falsehood of the principles on which it acts.

But notwithstanding the numerous imperfections which we have pointed out, the Penal Code of China is still a remarkable monument of the human mind; and there may even be found in it some of the great principles of modern legislation: the right of pardon granted to the Sovereign, the regard to extenuating circumstances, the right of appeal, the respect for individual liberty, guaranteed by the responsibility of magistrates charged with the repression of crime, and others, which serve to protect the people in some measure against the tyranny of the Mandarins.

The science of jurisprudence does not exist in China; and the office of advocate is unknown. In some of the edicts published by the Emperor, for the confirmation of sentences pronounced against great criminals, there is sometimes reference to decisions made in preceding analogous cases; but it is made only with the view of illustrating the particular interpretation of a text in the code. Such references to precedents cannot be considered to constitute what is understood by jurisprudence. Every magistrate charged with the administration of the law interprets it in his own way, and by what he regards as the general spirit of the legislature; but there is no special doctrine to secure them from any departure from it.

Measures are taken, however, not only to enable the magistrates to understand perfectly the laws they are called on to apply, but also to diffuse a knowledge of the code, as far as possible, among the people at large. All officers and persons in the employment of Government are ordered to make it their particular study; and a special enactment of the Code ordains, that at the end of every year, and in all localities, officers shall be examined upon their knowledge of the laws by their respective superiors; and if their answers are not satisfactory, they are to be fined a month's pay, if

they hold a high office, or receive forty strokes of the bamboo if they are of inferior rank. All individuals, labourers, artisans, and others, who, on occasion of their first offence (if committed by accident, or through the fault of other persons) shall be able to explain the nature and object of the law affecting them, shall be pardoned and released.

The Chinese Mandarins enjoy considerable power: but their position is not quite so brilliant as is commonly imagined. They have, indeed, great facilities for the rapid acquirement of wealth; and if they are men of talent and capacity, they may arrive pretty quickly at high office; but they are never sure of the morrow: a caprice of the Emperor, or the denunciation of a rich and powerful enemy, may at any time cause them to be degraded and sent into exile, or even put to death.

Public employments are as much sought after in China as in Europe, or perhaps more so, if we may judge by the precautions taken to avoid solicitations and repress that feverish eagerness for office which has excited so much indignation among us in these latter days.

These precautions are curious enough to make it worth while to glance at them. Who knows whether something of the kind may not be thought worthy of adoption in France?

The number of officers for each tribunal and for every department is fixed by law; and whoever shall be appointed unnecessarily, over and above this number—or shall cause another to be so appointed—shall receive a hundred strokes of the bamboo, and an increase of punishment for every supernumerary officer whose nomination he shall have procured. Were such a law in force in our country, the ardour of suitors and the goodwill of patrons would probably be a good deal cooled.

When civil government officers, who are not distinguished for eminent services rendered to the State, shall have been recommended to the goodness of the Emperor as persons worthy of the highest honours, these officers, and those who have recommended them, are to be sent to prison and beheaded.

Addresses sent to the Emperor, in favour of any of the great officers of the State, are considered as indicating the existence of traitorous machinations subversive of government; and their authors, as well as the officers whom they concern, if they have been aware of the offence, are punishable with death. This excessive severity cannot be intended merely to repress court intrigues, and the attainment of high offices by ambitious though incapable persons; the law is principally anxious to guard against the slightest

infringement of the power of the Emperor. In so vast a population as that of China, unrestrained by any moral or religious tie, the Sovereignty is naturally suspicious, and trembles, in some measure, before those great functionaries who are the depositaries of such a portion of its power as would permit them, if they dared, to shake off its yoke, and compromise the safety of the throne. The law of China is, therefore, immoderately severe towards the slightest offence indicative of want of due respect for the Emperor. It is forbidden under penalty of eighty strokes of the bamboo, to employ the individual name of his Majesty in any address, or to make use of it in instructing the people, or, under pain of a hundred strokes, to assume it one's self or bestow it on others. The bamboo also takes cognisance of the crime of throwing a stone, or any other projectile, against any of the Imperial residences.

The laws which regulate the conduct of the public functionaries in China, although very severe, are somewhat tempered by forms having a certain resemblance to what in France is called the Constitutional guarantee. When an officer of the government, either at court or in the provinces, commits any offence against the laws, whether in his public or private capacity, his superior, in all important cases, submits a circumstantial account of the affair to the Emperor, and the culprit cannot be brought to trial without the express sanction of his Majesty; privileged persons can only be pursued for offences against the law upon the positive order of the Emperor, to whom all proceedings are to be referred. But this privilege ceases when the crime partakes of the nature of treason; these crimes are, "rebellion, disloyalty, desertion, parricide, massacre, sacrilege, impiety, discord, insubordination, and incest." —(Vol. i. p. 27.)

It is especially with regard to the public functionaries that the system of penal responsibility of which we have spoken above, is most energetically applied. Every time that a tribunal or a body of official persons, have incurred guilt by pronouncing erroneous decisions, or such as being either too mild or too severe, are contrary to the laws, or who have even become chargeable with faults of negligence, the *registrar* is considered as the principal author of the crime: all the other participators are punished, but with less severity in diminishing proportion up to the president, whose punishment is the slightest of all.

In China, the lower the officer, the higher the responsibility, for it is said the crime would not have been committed if he had refused his assistance. Thus the subalterns are liable to the most terrible punishments if they afford their concurrence in an illegal

act, and to the resentment of their superiors if they refuse it. Their position would therefore become an intolerable one, but that in China official persons are never afraid of anything the law can menace them with, as they always trust to finding some way of wriggling out of it.

Another remarkable feature of the laws on this subject, is, that they regard an erroneous sentence pronounced by any of the tribunals as a crime. It is somewhat curious to European ideas to see a judge whipped for having made a mistake; and in China not only is a tribunal punishable for a wrong decision on a cause with the facts of which it may be presumed to be well acquainted, but even when a superior tribunal confirms the erroneous sentence of an inferior, or in the reverse case, when a cause has been sent from the superior to the inferior court.

The responsibility of the inferior officers is carried so far, that there are cases in which they would be put to death for having sealed a letter badly. If the Imperial seal is awkwardly placed, or turned upside down, all the officers responsible for affixing it are to receive eighty strokes; and if the person to whom the document is sent should on this account feel any doubts of its authenticity, and hesitate to execute the orders it contains, and that any military operation should thus have failed, the clerk in the office is to be put to death.

The civil capacity of functionaries is restrained within certain limits; and this is perhaps one of the wisest arrangements of the Chinese law. Not only all high officers of government, but even their clerks and registrars, are forbidden to hold land in the district under their control. No government officer in towns of the first, second, or third order, may take a wife within the limits of his jurisdiction, under pain of eighty strokes of the bamboo, or a hundred if her father or mother have a suit before the courts; and he is to undergo the same punishment if he marry such a woman to his son, grandson, brother, or nephew.

The penal scale established by the code is very simple. The most ordinary punishments are the cangue, and the bamboo applied with the large or small end; the strokes varying in number up to a hundred. A number above sixty is often combined with temporary or perpetual banishment, and with the brand. The punishment of death is executed by strangulation or decapitation, according to the gravity of the offence; and there is also, for great crimes, the "slow and painful death," or the torture of the knife, which is inflicted in this manner: The executioner puts his hand into a covered basket in which are a number of knives, marked

with the names of various limbs and parts of the body, and drawing out one at random, he cuts off the part indicated from the body of the victim. The relatives generally endeavour in such cases to shorten the unfortunate creature's sufferings, by giving money to the executioner that he may find as soon as possible the knife destined to be plunged into the heart.

The Chinese law, notwithstanding these atrocious severities, adopted with a view to the repression of crime, has some features not altogether unworthy of a modern code. There is especially a system of extenuating circumstances, founded on more moral bases than in the system pursued in France. With us the estimate of the value of such circumstances is left to the consideration of a jury, which has no other power than simply to declare that such circumstances exist. In China the law itself foresees certain facts, which when they are confirmed involve a diminution of punishment, or sometimes its entire remission.

In certain cases, on occasion, for instance, of some great event, the Emperor issues a general act of grace, which has the effect of a full pardon. This act, however, does not extend to those who have committed treasonable offences, or some others which are specified. The benefits of this amnesty extend to all who have committed offences through inadvertence, or who are implicated in them on account merely of their legal responsibility; but special pardons may be received by every criminal without exception.

Consideration for the relatives is often the inducement to a diminution of the punishment of the guilty, who have legally merited death; but in such cases there must be children under sixteen, or parents beyond seventy or particularly infirm, and the crime must be of such a nature that it could be brought under the operation of an act of grace. The case is then referred to the Emperor, who gives the decision respecting it. If the culprit has merited banishment, he will receive instead a hundred strokes of the bamboo, and pay a fine.

Age and infirmity will sometimes obtain indulgence even for the culprit himself; but in that case an explanatory memorial must be addressed to the Emperor. It is often sufficient if the age or infirmity exist at the time of trial, even though they may not have existed at the epoch of the crime.

The culprit who voluntarily surrenders to the magistrate, without the crime having been otherwise discovered, obtains a pardon, saving some civil reparation; and confession always obtains a reduction of punishment — in some cases, specially provided for, indeed, a complete pardon, saving always, as before, the civil repa-

ration. This appears judicious; and in this respect the Chinese are perhaps in advance of other nations. In France a confession will always obtain a reduction of punishment through a declaration of extenuating circumstances; but would it not be better that the law itself should provide for this reduction, which, being thus a matter of right, would often induce the guilty to make confessions, from the certainty of obtaining an amelioration of his lot?

The criminal who gives himself up, and at the same time causes the arrest of an accomplice, equally or more guilty than himself, has, in China, a right to a pardon.

The Chinese law, like that of France, provides certain cases of legal excuse. Thus, it is forbidden to enter an inhabited house by night without due authority; and if the master of it kill any one in the attempt to do this in an improper hour, he is not punishable. It is regarded as an act of legitimate self-defence. A husband who kills an adulterous wife or her paramour is also held blameless.

The treatment of culprits in prison, and the mode in which they are to undergo their punishment, is subject to minute regulation; and when a magistrate commits offenders to prison, and neglects to take with respect to them the measures of rigour prescribed by the law, he is punished with a number of strokes of the bamboo, proportioned to the crimes which the said offenders have committed. It happens, therefore, sometimes, as may be supposed, that a magistrate, rather than expose himself to the bamboo, conducts himself towards his prisoners with an atrocious cruelty that we could not have believed if we had not witnessed it.

One day, when we were passing along the road leading to Pekin, we met a party of soldiers, with an officer at their head, escorting a number of carts, in which were literally piled up a crowd of Chinese, who were uttering horrible cries. As we stopped to allow these cart-loads of human beings to pass, we were seized with horror on perceiving that these unfortunate creatures were nailed by the hand to the planks of the cart. A satellite whom we interrogated, replied, with frightful coolness, "We've been routing out a nest of thieves in a neighbouring village. We got a good many of them; and as we hadn't brought chains enough, we were obliged to contrive some way to prevent their escaping. So you see we nailed them by the hand."

"But do not you think there may be some innocent among them?"

"Who can tell? They have not been tried yet. We are taking them to the tribunal; and by-and-by, if there are any innocent men among them, they will be separated from the thieves."

The fellow seemed to think the thing quite a matter of course, and was even a little proud of the contrivance.

Perhaps, what was most hideous of all in this dreadful spectacle, was the mocking hilarity of the soldiers, who were pointing out to one another with an air of amusement the contortions and grimaces of the miserable creatures in their agony of pain. If a people can exhibit such barbarity as this in quiet and peaceable times, it may be imagined of what excesses they are capable under the excitement of revolution and civil war. In the provinces now in insurrection horrible abominations must be passing.

The Penal Code concerns itself greatly, as may be supposed, in the organisation of the family, which, in China, is a political as well as social institution; but, great as is the talk about filial piety, it is certain that there is much less real harmony and affection in Chinese families than among Europeans. The reason is obvious: in China the law and the bamboo, not duty and religion, regulate filial regard, and endeavour to maintain the ties of family by artificial means. In the beginning, doubtless, the laws passed on this subject were the expression of a true and lively feeling; but the feeling has passed away, and the law remains. The fear of the cangue and the rattan has taken the place of filial love; and the attachment of children to their parents is little more than an affair of habit.

Marriage, which forms the basis of domestic life, has been carefully and minutely regulated by Chinese legislation; and it is deeply impressed with the character of the domestic tyranny that is found in the manners of all nations placed out of the influence of Christianity. In speaking of the rites and ceremonies observed in the celebration of marriage, we have alluded to the despotic authority of parents over their children. Thus it is not the future wedded pair, but their respective families, who make the first advances, fix the wedding presents, arrange the articles of the contract, &c. All these preliminaries are adjusted through the intervention of third persons, who serve as go-betweens, and haggle about the price of the marriageable merchandise. When the bargain is concluded, the parties are affianced. If either family afterwards refuse to ratify the contract, its chief is condemned to receive fifty strokes with the bamboo, and the marriage is ordered to take place. In cases where there has been no contract, the acceptance of the presents is considered as sufficient evidence of the consent of the contracting parties.

It is thus easy to conclude a marriage without at all consulting the persons most interested; but this is only the case with the first

marriage. The father of a family cannot compel a son who has become a widower to marry a second time, under penalty of eighty strokes of the bamboo.

If, between the betrothal and the marriage, the relations of the bride promise her hand to another, the head of the family receives seventy strokes, or eighty if she has been already presented and approved. He who should accept a promise of marriage, knowing that negotiations were begun with another, would also receive eighty blows; but in cases where either party can be proved to have been guilty of theft or adultery, the contract becomes null and void.

The Chinese law points out certain circumstances as obstacles to the formation of an alliance. There are absolute hindrances, relative hindrances or mere retardatory obstacles. It is forbidden to marry during the time fixed by law for the mourning for a father, a mother, or a husband. A marriage contracted under these circumstances is not only declared null, but punished by a hundred strokes of the bamboo.

The marriage contracted during the mourning for a grandfather or grandmother, an uncle or an aunt, an elder brother or elder sister, remains valid*, but is punished, nevertheless, by eighty blows. A widow who has received from the Emperor any distinction of rank during the life of her husband, is punished by a hundred strokes if she marry again, besides being degraded from her rank, and separated from her new husband.†

Marriages contracted between persons bearing the same family name, with any one concealing himself on account of some crime, or with actors or musicians, are in themselves null and void; and the delinquents are punished by a certain number of strokes of the bamboo.

One of the consequences of the manner in which marriages are made in China is the divorce, not merely for determinate causes, but by mutual consent. It seems natural enough that persons who have been married without being consulted, should have at least the permission to separate if they cannot agree. The husband may repudiate his lawful wife for the following causes — some of which appear rather whimsical: sterility; immorality; contempt of the husband's father and mother; propensity to slander or to theft; a jealous temper; or habitual ill-health.

Impiety, which is placed by the law of China in the class of great crimes, is nothing but the failure in family duty. It is de-

* Vol. I. p. 188. † Vol. I. p. 189.

fined in the Code in the following manner: — "Impiety is the failure in respect and care for those to whom you owe your being, from whom you have had your education, and by whom you are protected. It is also impious to institute a law-suit against your near relations, to insult them, not to wear mourning for them, and not to respect their memories." *

The punishments incurred by this crime of impiety are very severe. Striking an elder relative is punished with death, and also bearing false witness against him, or even addressing abusive words to him, if he have heard the words, and complain of them. Parricides are subjected to the torture of the knife; and should they die in prison, their dead bodies are to undergo the mutilation.

The law fixes the kind and duration of mourning which every one is to wear on the death of a member of his family, and should any one receive news of the death of his father or mother, or a wife of her husband, without immediately putting on mourning, he is punishable by sixty blows, and a year of banishment. The same punishment is to be inflicted for leaving off the mourning before the appointed time, or for taking part, during its continuance, in any rejoicings.

Every government officer, on receiving intelligence of this nature, must immediately cease the exercise of his functions, and put on mourning. He must abstain from all public duty during the whole period; and if, with a view to avoid such suspension, he should falsely represent the deceased person to have been a more distant relation, he shall suffer the punishment of a hundred blows, and the forfeiture of his place, besides being declared incapable of ever holding any for the future. Military commanders, or persons holding important civil offices at a great distance from the Court, are however exempt from this law; and the line of conduct they are to observe on such occasions is to be determined by the express orders of the Emperor." †

It will be seen by these details, that the filial piety of the Chinese has need of the continual stimulus of the bamboo.

Among the ritual laws, there are some other rather curious provisions: — "All that concerns the science of the stars, as the sun, the moon, the five planets, the twenty-eight principal constellations, and others, as well as eclipses, meteors, comets, and other celestial appearances, shall be observed by the officers composing the astronomical council of Pekin. If the said officers

* Vol. I. p. 23. † Vol. I. pp. 310, 311.

neglect to observe exactly the said appearances, and to mark their time in order to render an account of them to his Majesty the Emperor, they shall be punished by sixty blows of the bamboo."

Here is another arrangement, not entirely injudicious: — "It is forbidden to magicians, sorcerers, and fortunetellers, to frequent the houses of the civil and military officers of government, under pretext of announcing the calamities that menace the nation, or the fortunate events that may be in store for it; they are to have five hundred strokes for every one of their predictions." This law does not, however, hinder them from casting the horoscopes of private individuals who may apply to them, nor from prognosticating births, nor consulting the stars in the accustomed manner.

The Chinese, notwithstanding their complete indifference in matters of religion, have very precise and severe laws relating to the official worship, and all negligence, imperfection, or irregularity in the observance of the rites, is repressed by the bamboo, applied equally to the delinquent and to the "master of the ceremonies," whose vigilance is presumed to have been in fault. Thus when the government officer charged with the education of the sacred pigs, which are fattened in the pagodas for solemn sacrifices, does not feed them in the manner prescribed by law, so that any one of them becomes indisposed, or thin, the officer is to receive forty strokes of the bamboo, and so many more for every additional sick pig. The health of the swinish multitude becomes, therefore, a very important affair; and a symptom of illness among them is enough to throw a whole pagoda into consternation.

The Bonzes, as well as the Tao-sse, or Doctors of Reason, are regarded by the law of China as civilly dead. They are forbidden to visit their fathers and mothers, to sacrifice to their dead ancestors, or, which is still more remarkable, to wear mourning for any of them, under pain of receiving a hundred stripes.

The penal code of China, of which we have endeavoured here to give a slight sketch, often enters into the most minute details concerning points with which European legislators would never think of concerning themselves; but in examining some of the countless numbers of its prescriptions and regulations, we have more than once had occasion to remark that the practice of the people was by no means in accordance with them. Authority having lost the strength and energy that it once had, the people live pretty much as they please, without troubling themselves about the Code and its regulations. The Mandarins exercise their power according to

their own caprice; and in the most serious affairs, when the law, perhaps, directs them to torture a prisoner to obtain a confession, or even to inflict the punishment of death, they pay no attention to the law unless it suits them to do so. Their own pleasure forms their only rule.

In the summer of 1849, we were crossing the province of Chantoung to go to Pekin. One evening we were proceeding in a hired cart along the imperial road which is bordered by great trees. Whilst the driver, seated upon one of the shafts of the vehicle, was occupied in smoking his pipe and whipping his lean mules, our eyes wandered carelessly over a dull and monotonous plain, that stretched out before us as far as the eye could reach.

Presently, the Chinese Phaeton, after having shaken the ashes out of his pipe, jumped down, and began looking to the right and left, like a man who is seeking for something. He soon came running back, and, pointing to the tops of some trees at the road-side, said, "Look there!" We raised our eyes in the direction in which he was pointing with the handle of his whip, and perceived numerous small cages suspended to the branches of the trees, and looking like some apparatus for bird-catching. "What is that?" said we. "Look well," he replied, "and you will soon know." The cart drove on, and soon, shuddering, we beheld in each of about fifty cages, coarsely made with sticks of bamboo, a human head. Almost all were in a state of putrefaction, and the features hideously distorted. Some of the cages were broken, and the heads hung in them only by the beards or the hair; from others the heads had fallen out altogether, and lay at the foot of the trees. We could not long endure this disgusting sight.

As we drove away, the driver related to us that this district had formerly been infested by bands of thieves, who ravaged the whole country round, and yet contrived to escape the pursuit of the Mandarins. At the beginning of this year, however, a Commissioner Extraordinary had been sent from Pekin, with a considerable armed force, and one day in a certain village he had seized almost the whole gang, and, without waiting for any authority from the Emperor, had had them all beheaded, and their heads hung to the tree on the road for a terror to evil doers.

This terrible execution had alarmed the whole district. "I would take good care," said our driver, "never to pass this way at night."

"Why?" said we; "there can hardly be much fear of robbers just now."

"No; but because, when it is dark, those heads all utter fright-

ful vociferations. You can hear them cry out from all the villages round."

We were not at all surprised that our driver should put faith in this story, for the mere sight of these hideous cages affected our imaginations so that we could not for days get rid of the impression.

CHAP. XVIII.

Departure from Kouang-tsi-hien. — Storm. — Government Couriers. — Mode of epistolary Correspondence. — Grand Festival at Hoang-mei-hien. — Fireworks. — Chinese Music. — Idea we ought to have of the Music of the Ancients. — Imperial Road to Pekin. — The Roads in China. — Halt upon the Borders of Lake Pou-yang. — Embarkation. — Kakkerlacs on board the Junk. — Glance over the Province of Hou-pé. — Agriculture in China. — Imperial Festival of Labour. — Details concerning Agriculture. — Agricultural Productions. — The Bamboo. — The Water Lily. — Imperial Rice. — Observant Character of the Chinese. — Classification of Corn. — What becomes of the Swallows during Winter. — Manner of making a Cat tell the Time. — Method of hindering Asses from braying.

Just as we were about to leave Kouang-tsi-hien, we received a visit from the Prefect of the town, whom we were happy to have an opportunity of thanking for the manner in which we had been treated. We asked what had become of the robber-chief.

"Yesterday," said he, "I was employed the whole day in interrogating him, and that was why I did not come to pay my respects to you. I sat also during a part of the night without being able to succeed in making him denounce his accomplices. That is just like the kouen-kouan; they stand by each other, even through tortures and death. In a few days, when he has recovered, and that the frenzy caused by the torture has disappeared, I will send him off to the capital, with the necessary documents connected with his case. The superior tribunals of Ou-tchang-fou will then undertake it. The Ngan-tcha-sse, 'Inspector of Crimes,' will endeavour to make him speak, but I do not think he will succeed."

It is customary for the judge, after having flagellated a prisoner till he is covered with blood, and one mass of bruises, to have remedies applied to restore his strength, so as to be able to torture him again without danger of killing him; and these remedies are said to be so efficacious, that the torture can often be repeated daily.

About an hour after we had quitted Kouang-tsi-hien, the sky became covered with clouds, a violent clap of thunder broke over

our heads, and enormous drops of rain began to fall. We feared for a time that we were going to have a tremendous storm, and the people of our caravan looked about anxiously in all directions for a place of refuge. The country we were traversing was wild and sterile, and the habitations were so few that we could not just then see any, except, at a very great distance, in a large village that lay quite away from the road, and that we could only have reached by crossing the fields.

Our Weeping Willow was in extreme perplexity, and he came every moment to our palanquins to ask what was to be done. "This is a most vexatious circumstance!" said he.

"Yes, very," we replied; "we are going to have bad weather, it seems."

"In that case what do you propose to do?"

"Do! what can we do? It's not easy to help it."

"But if the storm comes——"

"Well, we must submit as well as we can—be resigned; we do not see what else can be done."

But our conductor did not at all relish the idea of resignation, and continually returned to the charge, imagining, evidently, that, if we liked, we could find some means of conjuring the storm, or procuring shelter. He seemed to think that men like us ought not to have been embarrassed about such a thing as that. Fortunately for us, there was no storm after all; but after the few large heavy drops, the rain began to fall quietly and regularly. It continued to do so the whole day, and no one experienced the smallest inconvenience. On the contrary, the atmosphere, which before had been suffocating, became deliciously cool and fresh. The mud was not immoderate, as we were on a sandy soil, and one that was so dry and thirsty, that it drank in with avidity all the water that fell from the sky. The palanquin-bearers appeared quite delighted when they felt the rain running down their backs, and thus obtained so easily the pleasure of a prolonged bath; they burst into peals of laughter; they sang with all their might and main; and seemed to make a mere sport of their toilsome vocation. The horsemen and pedestrians were not less pleased; but, with bare heads, and for their entire clothing a thin pair of drawers, they revelled with delight in the cool fresh rain. We really envied them, but the Rites imperatively required that we should remain shut up in our palanquins.

Towards noon we were joined by two travellers, with peaked rattan caps, a threefold cotton girdle, and an enormous varnished box, worn in a cross-belt; on their feet they had sandals, fastened

with leathern thongs. They walked on in silence, swinging their arms, with a long and uniform step, but with no appearance of haste. Their eyes were constantly fixed on the ground, and they scarcely turned their heads when they passed through the middle of our caravan. In a few minutes they were far from us, and soon after quite out of sight. These two men were Government couriers, going to Pekin by the Imperial road, and the varnished boxes on their backs contained despatches from the Administration of Ou-tchang-fou. The Chinese Government employs couriers on foot and on horseback, whose services are performed with tolerable regularity; by this means it is made acquainted with what is passing in the provinces, and amongst the tributary nations. Relays of horses are kept at certain distances all along the principal roads, but on ordinary occasions they do not go faster than a trot. If the intelligence to be conveyed demands more celerity, the estafettes gallop day and night, or sometimes employ pedestrian couriers, whose pace is said to be faster than that of a horse. Before being accepted to fill this office, these men go through a long course of preparatory training, by making forced marches, loaded with a number of bags filled with sand, which are hung about their limbs, and the quantity of which they increase every day. By degrees they acquire great strength and agility; and when afterwards they diminish the weight to which their legs are accustomed, they are able to walk for days together without difficulty. These couriers never appear hurried; you would say they were walking at an ordinary pace, and yet they get along with extraordinary rapidity.

There is no such thing in China as a post, for the use of the public; and when you wish to send letters you must trust to the complaisance of some traveller, or send a messenger at your own expense, which is, of course, a very costly method. Accidents of various kinds also happen to the messengers on the road; and often, after all the expense you have been at, your letters go astray. The missionaries, who are accustomed to the prodigious facility of correspondence that exists in Europe, find it very hard to endure the tediousness of these communications. Fifty days suffice to bring a letter from Paris to Canton; but from Canton to Pekin takes three months.

The Chinese do not suffer much from this state of things; for having scarcely any domestic affections, they do not feel the need of corresponding with their relations and friends. Looking at everything only on the positive and material side, they have no idea of the tender relations by which two hearts delight to draw

near in intimate correspondence, and communicate their joys and their sorrows. They know nothing of the lively emotions that the mere sight of a known hand-writing can awaken; their hands never tremble as they break the seal of a letter; they do not often settle even their commercial affairs by writing, but prefer going to the place and treating *vivâ voce*.

It must not be supposed, however, that the Chinese do not frequently write letters; on the contrary, they address missives to each other on all occasions; but there is never anything friendly and confidential in them. They are mere commonplace formalities, consecrated by custom, and might be sent to any other person, as well as the one to whom they are addressed. If, therefore, any one should happen to open and read a letter addressed to any one else, provided he afterwards communicate its contents to the lawful owner of the epistle, it is a mere trifle, and no offence. If you see any one writing, and feel at all curious, you have only to lean over his shoulder, and coolly read the characters he is tracing; nobody minds doing that.

The first year of our residence in China, a fact of which we were witnesses furnished us with the means of estimating the importance and value of a letter in this country. We were staying at the time with a literary man, a native of Pekin, who had left his family eight years before to take the office of schoolmaster in one of the towns of the south. Many conversations that we had had with this Chinese had led us to suppose that he was not quite of so cold and insensible a nature as most of his countrymen; his manners were kind, and he had the appearance of possessing more warmth of heart than is common here. One day we were on the point of sending off a messenger to Pekin, and we asked him whether he would not like to take the opportunity of sending something to his family or friends. After considering for a moment, he said, "Oh, yes; I think I should write a letter to my old mother; I have heard nothing of her for four years, and she does not know where I am. Since there is such a good opportunity, it would not be amiss if I were to write a few lines."

We thought his filial piety did not seem of a very fervent complexion; but we merely told him that he had better, in that case, write immediately, as the messenger was going off that evening. "Directly, directly," he replied; "you shall have the letter in a few minutes;" and he called to one of his pupils who was singing out his classical lesson in the next room—probably some fine passage out of Confucius upon the love that children owe to their parents. The pupil presented himself with the proper air of demure modesty.

"Interrupt your lesson for a moment," said the master; "take your pencil, and write me a letter to my mother. But don't lose any time, for the courier is going directly. Here, take this sheet of paper;" and the pupil accordingly took the paper, and set about writing to his master's mother.

The Chinese mostly write their letters upon fancy paper; upon which are stamped, in red and blue, figures of birds, flowers, butterflies, and mythological personages. The Chinese character being always of a fine black, is not lost amidst these fantastic ornaments.

When the pupil had left the room with his sheet of ornamented paper, we asked the schoolmaster whether this lad knew his mother. "Not in the least," he answered. "I don't think he knew whether she was living or had already 'saluted the world.'"

"In that case, how can he write the letter? You did not even tell him what he was to say."

"Don't he know quite well what to say? For more than a year he has been studying literary composition, and he is acquainted with a number of elegant formulas. Do you think he does not know perfectly well how a son ought to write to his mother?"

We had nothing to reply to this; but we understood immediately the difference between filial piety, as it is felt and practised in China, and as it is so magnificently described and commented on in their books.

The pupil, obedient to his master's orders, lost no time. He returned soon afterwards, with his letter in an elegant envelope, which he had even had the politeness to seal all ready; so that this admirable son did not even give himself the trouble to read the unctuous expressions of tenderness and respect that he had addressed to his mother. No doubt he had known them by heart a long while, and had himself taught them to the pupil. He wished, however, to write the address with his own hand; which appeared to us rather superfluous, for the letter would have done just as well for any other mother in the Celestial Empire as for the one to whom it was addressed, and any other would doubtless have felt as much satisfaction in the receipt of it.

We travelled the whole day through the fresh pouring rain, and arrived in the evening at Hoang-mei-hien, a town of the third order, situated on the banks of a little river, not far from the Imperial road. The proximity of the lake Pou-yang, the Blue River, and the road to Pekin, gives a great commercial activity to this town, and it receives all the merchandise sent from the north or south of the Empire, for the great central mart of Han-keou.

Hoang-mei-hien was to be our last stage in the province of Hou-pé; and we were received in it with a magnificence that we had been little accustomed to since we had left the province of Sse-tchouen. It might have been thought that the Mandarins of this town intended to make us forget the annoyances we had experienced for the previous month.

The Communal Palace, in which we were lodged, was tastefully fitted up, and besides the hangings of rich red silk, the lanterns, and the sentences suspended on the walls, there were vases of flowers that shed a delicious perfume through the apartments.

The ceremonial of visiting etiquette was observed in all its rigour; there seemed no end of our bows, and of the abundant outpouring of fine hollow words; and at last, to crown all, we were treated at night to a serenade and a brilliant display of fireworks.

These were composed first of a prodigious quantity of crackers, suspended in large bunches on bamboo poles, their dry and noisy detonations never ceasing for a single moment. This perpetual cracking noise was only interrupted by the explosion of a sort of bomb shell, that went off very suddenly and with great noise; but the grandest pieces were placed at the angles of the court, where dragons and other fabulous beasts vomited fire at every pore. There were rockets of various colours, that shot into the air with splendid effect, and also a kind of wheel, called by the Chinese "a flying sun," which pleased us most of all. It has merely to be put on a large plate, and placed on the ground; the wheel is then kindled, and immediately it begins to turn rapidly, throwing out bluish flames in all directions; and then suddenly springing into the air, it rushes to an immense height, and lets fall a fiery rain of all sorts of brilliant and varied colours.

The Chinese have always been passionately fond of powder, of which they knew the use long before the Europeans, but their taste is less decided for the kind made use of in war than for the milder sort employed for fireworks. They were firework makers before they were artillerists, and they have remained faithful to their first inclinations, liking squibs and crackers a great deal better than cannon.

In all their festivals and solemnities of whatever character—births, marriages, funerals, meetings of friends, theatrical representations, receptions of Mandarins, and great men—they are sure to manage somehow or other to bring in fireworks. In the towns and villages you hear them popping and cracking at almost every hour of the night and day, so that one might take the whole

Chinese Empire for one great pyrotechnic establishment. We have said that in the poorest hovels, where the people have scarcely the necessaries of life, you are always sure to find melon-seeds, and we might have added also that fireworks are seldom wanting.

Of Chinese music we cannot speak so favourably as of their pyrotechnic displays. It is probable that, for this grand evening's entertainments, all the most distinguished artists of Hoang-mei-hien had been collected, and the orchestra was certainly considerable, and the instruments in great variety. There were hautboys, violins, flutes, very much like ours, and other both wind and stringed instruments, of such whimsical forms that we cannot attempt to give any description of them. Chinese music, it is true, has a certain softness and melancholy in its tones, that pleases you pretty well at first, but it is so intolerably monotonous, that if prolonged it becomes exceedingly irritating to the nerves. The Chinese have no semi-tones in their scales; indeed, one might suppose they merely blew into their instruments, or twanged their strings at random, from the inspiration of the moment; however, it appears they have notes, and though their compositions are doubtless not of much scientific value, you do sometimes hear something like simple melodies in them, such as are heard in the chants of savages, and which are more or less agreeable.

European books concerning China, and also the works of the Chinese themselves, might lead you to suppose they attach great importance to music, even to the point of regarding it as an essential element in good government and the happiness of the people. The *Yo-king*, or Book of Music, was counted among the sacred books, but it was lost in the great fire ordered by the Emperor Tsing-che-hoang-ti. Confucius speaks of this canonical book with the greatest respect, and deplores the loss of such a precious monument of antiquity. The esteem and veneration professed in ancient times for "the rites and music," might lead us to suppose that before the introduction of the worship of Buddha and Lao-tze these words designated the primitive religion of the Chinese, of whose doctrines little is known, but which must have been based on the great traditions confided to humanity. The Yo-king is supposed to have been a collection of hymns and prayers, chanted in the sacrifices and other religious solemnities, and containing also religious doctrine and instruction, and the Book of Rites is thought to have formed its compliment.

This opinion, that in the early age of China "music and the rites" was an expression for religion might be confirmed by many passages from the annals and canonical books. In the Li-ki, for

instance, you find these words: "Music is the expression of the union of earth and heaven. With music and ceremonies nothing in the Empire is difficult. Music acts upon the interior of man, and brings it into connection with the spirit. Its principal end is to regulate the passions; it teaches fathers and children, princes and subjects, husbands and wives, their reciprocal duties. The sage finds in music the rules of his conduct."

The philosophers of antiquity sometimes go still further, even to declaring that it is the chief support of authority, the bond of the laws, &c.; and it is evident that reference is there made to the religious instruction contained in the "Yo-king." The Annals, and all ancient writings, agree in saying that music was, in the early ages, the object of the continual meditations of sages, and of the care of Government.

It is related that Chun, the founder of the Chinese monarchy, inquired everywhere, when he visited different parts of the Empire, whether they had changed nothing in music. We can hardly suppose the question was merely of singing and notation. According to the school of Confucius, ceremonies and music are the most prompt and efficacious methods for reforming manners, and rendering the State prosperous. "Under the first dynasties," says a famous Chinese moralist, "the government had perfect unity, the ceremonies and music embraced the whole Empire." After the first dynasties, there came divisions into the government, and the ceremonies and music became only an empty name without reality. The ancient poets call music the echo of wisdom, the mistress and mother of virtue, the manifestation of the laws of heaven. Its purpose is to make known the *Chan-ty*, "the sovereign Lord," and to lead man towards him. All these sayings are very remarkable, and indicate evidently that among the ancient Chinese, music was the expression of religious worship paid to the Divinity; it is, therefore, easy to understand the great importance attached to it; but at present, as the above-quoted philosopher, Yang-siou, remarks, music, that is to say, religion, is only an empty name without reality.

The town of Hoang-mei-hien seemed determined to treat us in grand style, and to keep it up to the last. The next morning, just as we were about to set off, the Prefect and the principal functionaries presented themselves, and we were informed that an addition of thirty soldiers, and two military Mandarins, was to be made to our escort. These heroes were indeed already drawn up in the court-yard; at least, some were huddled in a corner, others crouched on the ground, and some were leaning against the wall,

smoking or fanning themselves. Their costume was tolerably uniform, and the ensign was standing in a most irreproachable attitude, and seemed to feel all the sublimity of his office. He held gravely in both hands a long bamboo pole, on the top of which floated a triangular flag of a red colour, inscribed on one side with the words "Militia of Hoang-mei-hien," and on the other with "Bravery!" As we crossed the court, accompanied by the authorities of the town, we were saluted by more fireworks: we really hardly understood such a display of magnificent courtesy. An expression made use of by the Prefect, however, afforded an explanation of these unaccustomed honours. At the moment when we were entering our palanquins, after having long and pompously thanked him for all his politeness, "You see," said he, "that you have nowhere been treated with more attention than in the province of Hou-pé." "Than in the town of Hoang-mei-hein," we replied, smiling; and with this amendment we entered the palanquins, and were carried away through an immense crowd, that thronged every avenue to the Communal Palace.

In all probability the order to give us this kind of ovation at Hoang-mei-hien had proceeded from the palace of the Governor of Ou-tchang-fou. They knew very well — for we had expressed our opinion often enough, and loudly enough — that we had not been satisfied with the treatment we had generally received in Hou-pé. They were not sure that our complaints on this subject might not lead to vexatious consequences, and they wished, before allowing us to enter the next province, to do something to give us a pleasant recollection of Hou-pé.

On leaving this town we completely changed the direction of our route. Our course from the frontier of Thibet to Canton described two sides of a triangle, of which Hoang-mei-hien occupies the apex. One side of this triangle runs from east to west, and the other from north to south. We met on this road a great number of travellers, amongst whom it was easy for us to distinguish the men of the north from their southern brethren. The latter might be known by their pale and somewhat effeminate but refined and intelligent faces, as well as by their more elegant costume; they were besides more talkative and playful; we often heard them warbling some song, though in a harsh nasal voice, and teasing each other with jokes and puns. The heat was scorching, but they seemed very little inconvenienced by it. The northmen, on the contrary, were suffocated by the heat and dripping with perspiration. They spoke little and sung still less, and only endeavoured to refresh themselves by continual chewing of bits of areca nut.

Their swarthy complexions, thick moustaches, more vigorous limbs, and especially their sonorous language, all bristling with rough aspirations, distinguished them strongly from the southern Chinese. Almost all the travellers were traders, and travelling with the merchandise that they were going to sell, or had just bought. Their means of transport for it were carts with two horses, and caravans of asses and mules, and especially barrows, guided by two men, one pulling by a rope, the other pushing in a pair of shafts. Sometimes when the wind was favourable they tried to lessen their toil by fixing above their small vehicles a mat or even spreading a sail. This contrivance must have afforded them much relief, or they would not have adopted it, for they are not the men for any needless complication of machinery.

The road we were following was broad enough, and at some time or other, under former dynasties, had most likely been a fine one, but it was now in a detestable state, almost everywhere broken up, full of hillocks and hollows, and mud holes, and frightful ruts, which the carts and barrows followed with the most scrupulous assiduity. It was easy to see that time was the only functionary who had charge of the road. The Chinese assert that the carelessness of Government with respect to the modes of communication only dates from the accession of the Mantchoo-Tartar dynasty. The Government does in fact never concern itself about the roads, except those which the Emperor has to traverse when he takes the trouble to travel. As to the people, they must manage as well as they can; and in the northern provinces, where navigable rivers are not so numerous as in the south, accidents frequently happen, and carriages upset and travellers crushed form incidents too common for anybody to concern themselves about; you merely pass by on the other side. There are some districts in which the public have endeavoured to supply for themselves a remedy for this deplorable negligence of the Government. In all lawsuits, disputes, and quarrels, it is customary only to have recourse to the tribunals at the last extremity; most people prefer choosing as arbiters some old men of tried integrity and long experience, whose decisions they respect. In such cases it is very common to condemn the party declared to be in the wrong to mend a certain piece of the road at his own expense by way of fine, and in these districts the good state of the road is in a direct ratio with the quarrelsome and litigious spirit of the inhabitants.

We found this day's march on the Imperial road extremely fatiguing; the tumult of the travellers, and the thick dust in which we were constantly enveloped, added much to the oppression of the

excessive heat. We regretted our little cross roads, where at least we had the advantage of being able to rest from time to time under the shade of a great tree, or drink a cup of ice-cold water from a mountain spring. Before the end of the day we arrived once more on the banks of that famous Blue River, which we seemed to meet everywhere since our departure from the capital of Sse-tchouen, and which we had passed on the ice not far from its source in traversing one of the great valleys of Thibet. On this day we crossed it in a large passage boat; this was the last time, and after an hour's navigation we landed at a little town called Hon-keou, that is to say, "Mouth of the Lake."

The lake at which we had now arrived was the celebrated Pou-yang, which the Chinese have brought into communication with the Yellow River, by cutting a tongue of land that separated them. At Hon-keou we had to settle a very knotty point, and one that to us was of no little importance. To get to Nan-tchang-fou, the capital of Kiang-si, we had to choose between two roads, equally frequented by travellers; the one by water across the lake Pou-yang, a real inland sea, which is delightful in fine weather, and with a favourable breeze, but dreadfully tedious if the wind be contrary, and very dangerous if you happen to meet with a storm. The other way was by land, but by roads generally bad, and nearly impassable in the season of rain and tempest, for then you have to journey almost incessantly through quagmires and ponds. There are also no Communal Palaces in the towns where you stop, and the inns are small, dirty, inconvenient, and destitute of every comfort. Between these two we had to choose, and the choice was not easy. If any one would have secured us a good wind, we should certainly have preferred the water; and on the other hand it would be more prudent to go by land, if any one would undertake that it should not rain. What our friend the Willow thought, it was impossible to guess; he was exceedingly ready to point out the inevitable inconveniences in either course, but when it came to taking a resolution, one way or the other, he wiped his tearful eyes and had nothing more to say.

The case seemed so perplexing, that we thought it better to stay a day at Hon-keou, in order to obtain a little more information. "Let us go to bed," said we to our conductor, "we are too tired to-day to settle this grave question; to-morrow we can reflect on it with calmness and deliberation." "Yes, that plan is full of wisdom," said he; "in great enterprises precipitation is always injurious."

On the following day, after consulting some experienced persons

of the locality, it was decided that on the whole we had better go by the lake. There was a favourable breeze, the sky was clear, and we heard from every one that there was no likelihood of any immediate change. The lake Pou-yang is about forty-five miles long, by from fifteen to eighteen broad, and, with the good wind that was blowing, one day would suffice to carry us to the end of our voyage. A junk was hired, a Mandarin junk, we were told, but it was really a merchantman, and the same evening we went on board in order to be able to start at dawn on the following morning.

A tolerably spacious cabin had been reserved for the Willow and ourselves, but we had scarcely retired to rest (as we supposed) than we began much to regret that we had not passed the night on shore. Swarms of kakkerlacs began to make war upon us in the most pitiless manner. We heard them first skimming round in circles, pursuing one another, bumping themselves against the wainscot, and performing all kinds of gambols, very amusing, doubtless, for them, but far from agreeable to us. By degrees, however, they became quieter, to rest a little probably, in order to be ready for their more atrocious manœuvres, and then they took a little more exercise, to get up an appetite. Nothing comes amiss to a kakkerlac: shoes, hats, coats, lamp-oil, ink and ink-stands, tobacco, and even the tobacco pouch; but their favourite dainties are the tops of your fingers, ears, and toes; they would in fact eat a traveller up, clothing, bedding and all, if they were let alone — it would only be a question of time and patience. We heard them constantly gnawing, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. Sometimes they had the insolence to pass over our faces; we could feel the tickling of their little feet and their cold stomachs. At length, by dint of searching, they discovered some small opening, and then they were not long in insinuating themselves beneath the coverlet, and beginning to promenade along our arms and legs.

There was such a multitude of these disgusting insects on board this junk, and they were so intolerably impertinent, that we had to pass the whole night in chasing them; and even in this it was necessary to be extremely cautious, and merely put them to flight without crushing them, for they give out such an intolerably fetid odour when crushed, that one would really almost rather make them the present of a toe, than come to this extremity.

These kakkerlacs swarm in the south of China, and as they have a very marked predilection for whatever is dirty, and especially old furniture and old rags, they choose mostly to invade the habitations of the poor, though they do not by any means despise those of the rich. They make their way into linen, books, and

chinks of floors, and seem to find everywhere suitable board and lodging; but the junks are their most favoured resort, and they increase and multiply in them in a truly terrific manner.

It is not a disagreeable-looking creature, being of a pretty chesnut colour, and about an inch long. It can hardly go further in its flight than a grasshopper can leap, but to make amends it can gallop with marvellous rapidity. Were it not for its bug-like odour and its devastating and cunning propensities, it would not be an uninteresting animal.

As soon as day broke, the army of kakkerlacs effected a retreat, and retired into cantonments. The captain of the junk gave the order to sail, and, strange to say, it did not appear that there was anything to stop for; provisions had been laid in the evening before, and all the men were on board, — not one failed to answer to the roll-call. The capstan was then manned, and the anchor began to rise to the measured song of the sailors, and the sound of the tam-tam. An immense matting sail was unfurled, a packet of fireworks let off, and as the breeze caught the junk we began to glide rapidly over the blue waters of the lake Pou-yang.

We had now left the province of Hou-pé, to enter that of *Kiang-si*. Hou-pé signifies "north of the Lake," and serves to designate the country lying northward of the great lakes Pou-yang and Thing-toun. The province of Hou-pé is in all respects very inferior to that of Sse-tchouen. The land, which is not very fertile, is covered with a multitude of ponds and marshes, of which the Chinese, industrious and patient as they are, can make but little use. The villages have in general a very poor and wretched appearance. The inhabitants have an unhealthy and rather wild aspect, and are frequently affected by cutaneous diseases. We have nowhere else noticed so much baldness, or so many scald-heads, and there is little doubt that these infirmities proceed from the stagnant waters amongst which these unfortunate people pass their lives, and still more from the unwholesome diet to which they are confined. It is said that in the province of Hou-pé, the harvest of a year is seldom sufficient for a month's consumption. The great populations of the towns are supplied from the neighbouring provinces, and especially Sse-tchouen, which cannot in ten years consume the produce of one. We remarked, nevertheless, in the province of Hou-pé, some tolerably fine plantations of indigo, cotton and hemp, besides the numerous rice-fields that border the lakes and rivers.

Although the eighteen provinces of the Chinese Empire cannot all be placed on the same rank for fertility and the value of their productions, it may nevertheless be said that on the whole China

is an admirably fertile country, and cultivated with remarkable intelligence. In no other country in the world has agriculture been so highly honoured; from the remotest antiquity, it has been placed in the first rank among various kinds of industry. It has been celebrated by the greatest moralists, such as Confucius and Meng-tze; the magistrates have constantly, in their proclamations, recommended the people to be assiduous in the culture of the fields; and the head of the State — the Emperor — never fails to render homage to agricultural labour, at the opening of each year, by a public ceremonial which dates as far back as the 12th century before our era. On the twenty-third day of the third Chinese moon — that is to say, towards the end of the month of March — the monarch goes to the sacred field accompanied by the three princes of the blood, the nine Presidents of Courts, a great number of other functionaries of secondary rank, and several labourers. After having offered sacrifice upon an earthen altar, he himself lays his hand upon the plough, and traces a certain portion of a furrow; following his example, the princes and ministers, each in their turn, guide the plough, and trace some furrows; and then the labourers complete the tillage of the field.

In order to enable the reader better to judge of the importance attached to this ceremony, we will translate the programme of the fête presented in the form of a memorial to the Emperor Kien Long, and inserted, in 1767, in the gazettes of Pekin and the provinces.

"The Tribunal of Rites, and the other Tribunals, respectfully announce the ceremony of the 23d day of the 3d moon, of the thirty-second year of the reign of Kien Long (April 22, 1767). The Emperor will perform in person the labour of tilling the ground. On the evening before, the Mandarins of the secondary palace of the Emperor will respectfully bear the tablet of the Tribunal of ministers to the temple dedicated to the inventors and protectors of agriculture. The Mandarins of the office of Public Revenue will prepare the instruments of tillage and the boxes filled with seed-corn, and transmit them to the Governor of the capital. The latter, after having covered them with silk envelopes, and enclosed them in boxes, will have them carried, and will himself accompany them to the Sacred Field.

"Red tablets will be planted on the ground to mark and distinguish the different portions of land which the princes and great persons have to till, and all the instruments of tillage will be placed in order near the Imperial pavilion.

"On the day of the ceremony, the Mandarins of the Emperor's household, the Master of the Ceremonies, and the other officers of

the Court will repair at the fifth watch (daybreak) to the outside of the Imperial palace, there to wait the conclusion of the sacrifices. These being finished, the ten great officers of the first guard will surround the Son of Heaven, and conduct him to his palace to repose himself and quit his habits of ceremony. The princes and great personages who have to perform the labour will also quit theirs. In the mean time the plough and the whip, and the boxes of seed-corn to be used by the Emperor, will be taken out of their envelopes and placed on one side of the Sacred Field.

"The Master of the Ceremonies, the Mandarins of the Imperial household, and the other officers on duty, will assemble at noon in the Sacred Field. The four titled old men, the fourteen chanters, the thirty-six players of instruments, and twenty peasants wearing straw hats, and holding spades, rakes, pitchforks, and brooms in their hands, will place themselves in two lines, to the right and the left of the Sacred Field, along with the fifty standard bearers, the thirty-four old men of Pekin, and the thirty labourers of the three orders. All being ranged in order, shall stand waiting in silence.

"The hour of tillage having come, the first Mandarin of Agriculture shall enter the palace to invite the Son of Heaven. Then the Master of the Ceremonies shall take a flag and shall wave it three times. The three princes, and the nine great personages who are to till the ground, will then go to the spots marked out, and all who have any office will repair to their posts, the rest ranging themselves on two sides of the Sacred Field.

"The ten great officers of the first guard having surrounded the Emperor, will conduct him to the Sacred Field, and his Majesty will advance, with his face turned towards the south. As soon as he has reached the spot, the President of the Tribunal of Rites will say in a loud voice, 'Present the plough,' and immediately the Minister of Public Revenue, with his face turned towards the north, will kneel down on both knees, and will present the handle of the plough to the Son of Heaven, who will take hold of it with his right hand. The President of the Tribunal of Rites will then say in a loud voice, 'Present the whip,' and immediately the Governor of Pekin, with his face turned towards the north, will kneel down with both knees on the ground and will present the whip, which the Son of Heaven will take in his left hand. Two old men will then lead forth the oxen, and two labourers of the first order will support the plough. The President of the Tribunal of Rites, and the first Mandarin of Agriculture, will walk before them. At the first movement of his Majesty all those who have flags will wave them, and the singers will begin their songs

to the accompaniment of all the instruments, the Governor of Pekin will bear the box of grain, and the Minister of Public Revenue will follow him. The Emperor will till three furrows.

"When the Son of Heaven shall have finished his tillage, the President of the Tribunal of Rites will say in a loud voice, 'Receive the plough.' The Minister of Public Revenue will then kneel down to receive it. The President of the Tribunal of Rites will then say in a loud voice, 'Receive the whip.' The Governor of Pekin will immediately kneel down to receive it. They will cover the plough and the whip, as well as the boxes of seed-corn, with the silk envelopes. Then the music will stop, and the President of the Tribunal of Rites will invite the Son of Heaven to ascend the Imperial pavilion. The same President, and the first Mandarin of Agriculture, will conduct his Majesty up the central staircase, and his Majesty will seat himself with his face turned to the south.

"All the Princes, Mandarins, and great personages who have no part in the remainder of the ceremony, will range themselves on either side of the Emperor, and remain standing. Then the three princes will begin to till the ground, and till five furrows, each having an old man to guide their oxen, two labourers to hold up the plough, and two inferior Mandarins of Pekin to walk after them and sow the seed. When they have finished, they will come and take their places. The nine first dignitaries of the Empire will then begin to till and will make nine furrows, each having an old man to guide the oxen, and two labourers to support the plough, and two inferior Mandarins to walk after them and sow. When they have finished they will come and take their places in proper order, and remain standing; and the inferior Mandarins of Pekin will cover the implements of husbandry and the boxes of grain with their silk envelopes, and will carry them away.

"The President of the Tribunal of Rites will then lead to the foot of the Imperial pavilion, on the western side, all the Mandarins of Pekin, the old men and the labourers, dressed according to their condition, and each bearing an implement of husbandry. Then all together, with their faces turned towards the north, will kneel three times, and three times strike the earth with their foreheads, to thank the Son of Heaven.

"After this ceremony, the old men and the labourers will go and finish the tillage of the Sacred Field; and then the President of the Tribunal of Rites will come and inform his Majesty that the ceremonies of the tillage are finished. The Emperor will then descend from the pavilion by the eastern staircase, and will enter

a car of state, and will go out by the gate of Sien-nang, escorted by choirs of singers and bands of musicians."

A similar solemnity takes place in every province, the Governor taking the part of the Emperor, and proceeding, with his principal officers, to the field to be cultivated. Whatever influence the Government and the Mandarins may have in the matter, it is certain that the Chinese profess a great esteem for agriculture, and public opinion ennobles in some measure all that relates to the labours of the fields. How many times have we seen on the roads in the northern provinces rich farmers, sometimes wearing silken robes, standing waiting gravely with a three-pronged pitchfork the passage of the carts and caravans of mules, in order to collect the dung. It was evident there was in their eyes nothing mean and despicable in the occupation, and the travellers manifested no surprise at it. The very word made use of for this action is elegant and dignified; it signifies literally to *gather* — thus you gather flowers, or the dung of horses — the expression is always the same.

Chinese agriculture is, from the great division of territorial property, seldom conducted on a large scale. There are, indeed, in the north, farms of considerable extent, but whether the cultivation be on a large or a small scale, the Chinese use only the most simple instruments. Their ploughs are frequently without any forewheel, and only turn up the earth a very little way.

In the south, the rice-fields are usually tilled with buffaloes, called "aquatic oxen."

In the north, our common domestic oxen are made use of, as well as horses, mules, and asses; and more than once it happened to us to see a plough drawn by a woman, while her husband walked behind, and guided it. Pitiable it is to see the poor things sticking their little feet into the ground as they go, and drawing them painfully out again, and so hopping from one end of the furrow to the other. One day we had the patience to wait a long while at the side of a road, to watch whether the poor labouring wife, who was drawing the plough, was allowed from time to time to rest herself, and we saw with pleasure that there was a cessation of work at the end of each furrow. The husband and wife then sat down in pastoral fashion, on a little hillock, under the shade of a mulberry tree, and refreshed themselves by smoking their pipes.

In the southern provinces, the Chinese prepare their lands, and especially their rice-fields, with human manure, which they spread over them in profusion. It is unquestionable that by this means they give a strong impulse to vegetation; but it is possible, also,

that the rural produce under this system is of a less salubrious nature, and it may be that to this cause is attributable the existence of several maladies among the inhabitants of the south that are unknown in the north. Without being aware of the value attached by the Chinese to this kind of manure, one would hardly reconcile with their known character the liberality with which countless small buildings are provided in all parts for the accommodation of travellers. There is no town or village where the most eager competition does not take place on this point. On the least frequented road, in the most desert places, you are astonished to find these small edifices, built of straw, clay, or even stone. You would really suppose yourself in a country where solicitude for objects of public interest was carried even to excess; but, in reality, self-interest is the motive power that has been at work in the production of these useful institutions.

When you enter a Chinese hamlet, or approach a farm, you are often suddenly struck by a horrible stench that threatens to suffocate you. Not that healthy, though somewhat powerful odour, that escapes from cow-houses and sheep-folds, but an atrocious mixture of all that is disgusting. The Chinese have, indeed, such a passion for human manure of all kinds, that the barbers even save the croppings of beards and the cuttings of nails, and sell them to farmers to enrich the soil.

Small cultivators in China often employ spade husbandry; and it is impossible not to admire the neat condition of their fields, from which they remove every weed with the most invincible patience. The ground must be bad and sterile indeed, if they cannot succeed in making it produce something. In places too dry for the culture of rice, they sow the sweet potato, hemp, and cotton; and if there is a corner quite unproductive, they plant in it some useful trees, the mulberry, the tallow tree, or at least some pines for turpentine. The Chinese farmer is incredibly anxious about his harvest; if he dreads that a violent wind may shake out the grains of rice by lashing the ears one against another, he binds several stalks together into a kind of sheaf, so as to make them afford each other a mutual support, and check the ravages of the wind. In irrigation, also, they display great industry, often carrying the water through bamboo tubes up the sides of mountains, which are cut into terraces, and cultivated to the very top. They have a thousand contrivances, in times of drought, to spread the waters of rivulets and ponds over their fields, and enable them to flow off again when the inundation is too great. They make use chiefly of chain pumps, which they put in motion with their feet,

and which send the water from one reservoir to another with great rapidity. Sometimes they fix at the edges of streams large wheels of extreme lightness, which a very slight current is suificient to turn. These wheels are most ingeniously constructed, and surrounded with vessels that take up the water from the rivulets and pour it into large wooden tanks, whence it afterwards runs through little rills over the fields.

Many provinces are so fertile, and cultivated with so much care and skill, that three harvests a-year are regularly gathered. When the first is pretty well advanced, they sow the second in the intervals between the ridges, so that there are two different crops in the same field at the same time. All the cereals known in Europe are found in China, and even exhibit varieties not found elsewhere. In the north barley and wheat are more especially cultivated; and in the south, rice, which is the principal food of the lower classes, and the basis of aliment for all. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that throughout the Empire the Chinese live chiefly on rice; in the north and west it is not more used than in France. It is only seen on the tables of the rich, and then mostly on grand occasions. Wheat, buck-wheat, barley, Indian corn, millet, form the daily food of the people, except in the province of Kan-sou, where bread is made precisely as in Europe; everywhere else they spoil the wheaten flour, eating it in the state of unfermented half-done paste, sometimes in the shape of a bun, sometimes pulled out in ribbands like macaroni. Little loaves about the size of a man's fist are occasionally made, but merely boiled in steam.

Besides possessing the cereals, fruits, and vegetables of Europe, China has also, in her vegetable kingdom, a rich variety of other productions, many of which would doubtless prosper in the south of France, and especially in our superb possessions in Africa. Amongst the most celebrated we must mention the bamboo, the numerous uses of which have had great influence on the habits of the Chinese. It is no exaggeration to say that the mines of China are less valuable to her than her bamboos; and, after the rice and silk, there is nothing that yields so great a revenue. The uses to which the bamboo is applied are so many and so important, that one can hardly conceive the existence of China without it. It issues from the ground like the asparagus, of the diameter that it afterwards remains when grown. The dictionary of Khang-hi defines it as, "a production that is neither tree nor grass" (*fei-tsao fei-mou*), that is an amphibious vegetable, sometimes a mere plant, and sometimes acquiring the proportions of a tree. The bamboo has

been known from the remotest times in China, of which it is a native; but the cultivation of the large kind dates only from the end of the third century before the Christian era. Sixty-three principal varieties of the bamboo are counted in the Empire; they differ from one another in diameter, height, the distance of the knots, the colour, and the thickness of the wood, in their branches, leaves, and roots, as well as in peculiar and whimsical conformations which are perpetuated in certain species. A forest of bamboos will yield a considerable revenue to its proprietor, if he knows how to regulate the cutting. "The grandchildren of the bamboo," says the Chinese proverb, "never see their grandmother; but the mother is never separated from her children."

Among the useful and curious vegetable productions of China, exclusive of the object of the most active commerce—tea—may be counted the wax tree; the tallow tree; the paper mulberry; the *li-tchi*, or varnish tree; the *loung-yen*, or dragon's eye; the jujube; the star anise; the cinnamon tree, of which the bark is very thick; the orange, of which there are many species; the medlar, and a number of other fruit trees peculiar to the southern provinces; the tree pæony; the camellia; the hortensia, brought from China by Lord Macartney; the small magnolia; many kinds of roses; the odoriferous Queen Marguerite; the day lily; the rhubarb; the *jin-chen*, or ginsing; and a prodigious diversity of ligneous herbaceous plants, cultivated for the beauty of their flowers, as well as the cotton tree, and a great number of textile, economical, or cereal productions, which would deserve to be naturalised in Europe.

The cultivation of useful vegetables is a branch of industry to which the Chinese have always especially devoted themselves; and from the remotest epochs it has attracted the attention of the Government, and received much encouragement. In the most populous provinces even the rivulets and ponds have been turned to productive account, and nutritive aquatic plants, such as the tubers of the sagittarius and water lily, of which the Chinese make such wonderful use, are sown in them.

The nymphæa, or water-lily, has always been a great favourite in China. The poets have celebrated it in their verses, on account of the beauty of its flowers; the Doctors of Reason have placed it among the ingredients for the elixir of immortality; and the economists have extolled it for its utility. At the present day, it has also become the symbol of the secret societies.

This plant, commonly called in China *lien-hoa*, has broad rounded leaves, scolloped at the edges, fleshy, full of veins, and sloping to

the middle; some swim on the surface of the water, others rise above it to different heights. They are of a tender green on the upper surface, rather darker underneath, and supported by long stalks spotted with black. The root of the water-lily is long-lived; it is as thick as your arm, and sometimes as much as twelve or fifteen feet long. The colour is pale yellow outside, and milk-white within; and it lies along the bottom of the water, or attaches itself to the clay by bunches of fibres, which spring out at various distances along it. From the midst of these fibres it sometimes sends out shoots which increase its growth, but it commonly grows at the two ends. The stalks of both leaves and flowers are pierced quite to the extremity by holes rounded like those of the root, and symmetrically arranged along them.

The flowers of the water-lily have numerous petals, disposed in such a manner that when they are not completely open you might take them for large tulips; afterwards they expand into a rose-like form. In the middle of the flower is a large conical pistil, which becomes a rounded, spongy fruit, divided throughout its length into cells full of oblong seeds, enveloped in a kind of shell like the acorn, and composed like it of two white lobes, between which is the germ. The stamens are very delicate filaments terminating in violet-coloured anthers.

The Chinese distinguish four kinds of water-lily, the yellow, the white, the red, and the pink, the three latter sometimes with single flowers, sometimes with double. This plant may be propagated by seeds, but more easily and rapidly by roots; it does not require any kind of culture, and there is nothing comparable to the effect produced by this splendid flower on the ponds and basins of China. It does not bud till towards the end of May, but its germination is very rapid, and its great leaves, lying on the surface of the water or raised majestically to various heights, form a covering of most exquisite verdure, the beauty of which is of course enhanced when it is enamelled by flowers of various dyes. They are larger than poppies, and their dazzling tints are beautifully relieved by the green leaves. The young Chinese poets are particularly fond of celebrating the beauty of the water-lily gleaming in the moonlight as the boats row about the basins illumined by swarms of glow-worms and fire-flies.

The water-lily is very remarkable, too, in a utilitarian point of view. Its seeds are eaten as nuts are in Europe, and boiled in sugar and water they are considered delicious by epicures. The gigantic root is a great resource for culinary preparations, and in whatever way it is dressed, it is always excellent and wholesome.

The Chinese pickle great quantities of it with salt and vinegar, to eat with rice; reduced to a powder it is extremely agreeable when boiled with milk or water, and in the summer it is eaten raw like fruit, and is very refreshing. Finally, the leaves are constantly made use of instead of paper for wrapping up all kinds of things, and when dried are often mixed with tobacco, to render it a little milder.

The Chinese owe their numerous discoveries in agriculture principally to their eminently observant character, which has enabled them to turn to use an immense number of plants neglected in Europe. They are very fond of the study of nature, and their greatest men, and even their Emperors, do not disdain to attend to the smallest circumstances connected with it, and to collect with care whatever promises to be of public utility. The celebrated Emperor Khang-hi has thus rendered an important service to his country. We find in the curious memoirs written by that prince the following passage:—"I was walking," says the Emperor Khang-hi, "on the first day of the sixth moon, in some fields where rice was sown, which was not expected to yield its harvest till the ninth. I happened to notice a rice plant that had already come into ear; it rose above all the rest, and was already ripe. I had it gathered and brought to me; the grain was very fine and full, and I was induced to keep it for an experiment, and see whether it would on the following year retain this precocity, and in fact it did. All the plants that proceeded from it came into ear before the ordinary time, and yielded their harvest in the sixth moon. Every year has multiplied the produce of the preceding, and now for thirty years it has been the rice served on my table. The grain is long, and of a rather reddish colour, but of a sweet perfume, and very pleasant flavour. It has been named *ya-mi*, or 'Imperial rice,' because it was in my gardens that it was first cultivated. It is the only kind that can ripen north of the Great Wall, where the cold begins very early, and ends very late, but in the provinces of the south, where the climate is milder, and the soil more fertile, it is easy to obtain two harvests a-year from it, and it is a sweet consolation to me to have procured this advantage for my people."

The Emperor Khang-hi did render in fact an immense service to the populations of Mantchuria, by encouraging the culture of this new kind of rice, which succeeds admirably in dry countries, and has no need, like the common rice, of perpetual irrigation. It would certainly prosper in France, and it is not the fault of the missionaries if it has not long since been acclimated there.

Whilst we were at the mission in the environs of Pekin, we several times made it our business to send some of it to the ministers of agriculture and commerce, but we have never heard that any experiment was tried with it. How indeed could it be expected that with our perpetual revolutions and rapid changes of government, a minister could preserve sufficient tranquillity of mind to occupy himself with a new kind of rice discovered by a Mantchoo-Tartar Emperor?

The observant spirit with which the Chinese are gifted in the highest degree, has led them to make a curious remark concerning corn, which is, in their opinion, of the greatest importance. One of our Christian converts asked us one day, if in France the kinds of corn that flower in the night were very numerous. The question puzzled us, and we were obliged to confess that not being agriculturists, we did not know that any species flowered in the night, that we had never heard the phenomenon mentioned, and that probably, even the farmers of our country would know no more about it than we did. "Oh, no!" he exclaimed, "your cultivators must know that, or how could they carry on their agricultural labours with success? Do they sow their fields at random without paying any attention to the sun and moon?" For the second time we were forced to avow our profound ignorance, and thereupon our neophyte began to explain to us some most curious theories connected with the blooming of corn. He told us that the numerous kinds of corn were all ranged under two categories, one of which invariably began to flower in the night, and the other no less invariably in the day. "The choice of the ground, the time for sowing, and the kind of culture, should," he said, "be varied according to the species;" and he maintained that for want of being acquainted with these two classifications, and conforming to the rules derivable from them, people must expose themselves to the risk of having very bad harvests.

We cannot undertake to say how far this observation is correct, and we must own we never had sufficient zeal in the cause of agricultural science to spend a night in a corn-field in order to mount guard over the ears, and catch in the fact those that should take it into their heads to blow. Indeed we are not sure that even if we had we should have been much the forwarder, for we should very likely not have been able to perceive the flowering of an ear of corn, if it did take place. We must therefore leave it to those better informed to decide on the value of this Chinese observation.

A very curious and original collection might be made of the

remarks of the Chinese, not only on agriculture, but also on many other branches of natural history. We will mention a few that we happen to remember, in order to give an idea of the sagacity of this people.

Everybody knows that swallows go away in the autumn, and return in the spring, and the Chinese have been as curious as ourselves to know what became of them during their six months of absence, and where they went to. It had been ascertained that swallows, on whose claws certain marks had been made to know them by, returned several successive years to the same house; it was therefore certain that those that went away in the autumn were the same that had returned in the spring. But where did they go to? The ancients supposed that they passed beyond the seas, and others even that they plunged beneath the waters; but these opinions are regarded by the Chinese as puerile fables, and several observations have demonstrated to them, that swallows do not, as is supposed, undertake long journeys, in order to go and pass the winter in some warm country. It is written in the annals of China that "the people being overwhelmed by the misfortunes that afflicted them, during the reign of the Emperor Ngan-ty, more than a thousand families deserted their villages, and went to seek a refuge in the wildest mountain solitudes, in order to escape the horrors of insurrection and famine. As there were no vegetable crops they were reduced to feed on rats and swallows, which they found collected in masses in the caverns and hollows of the rocks." Another historian reports the following analogous fact:—"The Emperor Yang-ty having ordered some repairs on the banks of the Yellow River, there were found immense multitudes of swallows collected in the holes and caves of the rocks, and wherever the shore was steep and solitary." A Chinese naturalist, named Luchi, says, after reporting these circumstances —

"The ancients thought that swallows changed their climate, but it is difficult to imagine how they should have done so, since no one has ever seen them set out in the direction of southern countries, nor proceed in troops, like the migratory birds that come every year from Tartary, and return thither in the spring. These draw themselves up into regular armies, and their passage lasts several days, whilst the swallows, when they disappear from one province, are not seen in any greater numbers in the other, even in the provinces nearest the sea;" and the Chinese naturalist concludes that the swallows do not emigrate, but remain always about the same country, and that during the winter they merely hide themselves in holes and caverns. We do not know what the

naturalists of Europe may say to this account. The following anecdote, illustrative of another Chinese observation, will, we fear, not be to their taste any more than to that of the clock-makers.

One day when we went to pay a visit to some families of Chinese Christian peasants, we met, near a farm, a young lad, who was taking a buffalo to graze along our path. We asked him carelessly, as we passed, whether it was yet noon. The child raised his head to look at the sun, but it was hidden behind thick clouds, and he could read no answer there. "The sky is so cloudy," said he, "but wait a moment:" and with these words he ran towards the farm, and came back a few minutes afterwards with a cat in his arms. "Look here!" said he; "it is not noon yet;" and he showed us the cat's eyes, by pushing up the lids with his hands. We looked at the child with surprise, but he was evidently in earnest: and the cat, though astonished, and not much pleased at the experiment made on her eyes, behaved with most exemplary complaisance. "Very well," said we; "thank you;" and he then let go the cat, who made her escape pretty quickly, and we continued our route.

To say the truth, we had not at all understood the proceeding; but we did not wish to question the little pagan, lest he should find out that we were Europeans by our ignorance. As soon as ever we reached the farm, however, we made haste to ask our Christians whether they could tell the clock by looking into a cat's eyes. They seemed surprised at the question; but as there was no danger in confessing to them our ignorance of the properties of the cat's eyes, we related what had just taken place. That was all that was necessary; our complaisant neophytes immediately gave chase to all the cats in the neighbourhood. They brought us three or four, and explained in what manner they might be made use of for watches. They pointed out that the pupil of their eyes went on constantly growing narrower until twelve o'clock, when they became like a fine line, as thin as a hair, drawn perpendicularly across the eye, and that after twelve the dilatation recommenced.

When we had attentively examined the eyes of all the cats at our disposal, we concluded that it was past noon, as all the eyes perfectly agreed upon the point.

We have had some hesitation in speaking of this Chinese discovery, as it may, doubtless, tend to injure the interest of the clock-making trade, and interfere with the sale of watches; but all considerations must give way to the spirit of progress. All im-

portant discoveries tend in the first instance to injure private interests, and we hope, nevertheless, that watches will continue to be made, because, among the number of persons who may wish to know the hour, there will, most likely, be some who will not give themselves the trouble to run after the cat, or who may fear some danger to their own eyes from too close an examination of hers.

The Chinese have also given us the benefit of their experience in another similar case, which is not liable to the inconveniences of the preceding, and has no tendency to compromise any industrial interest. At most it could only be disagreeable to asses, by somewhat restraining them in the exercise of their free will. In the north of China, where travelling by water is not so easy as in the south, it is very common to make journeys in waggons, or on the backs of asses or mules. You stop every evening, and pass the night at one of the more or less comfortable hostelries which, such as they are, you never fail to meet with on every road. The great inconvenience of these inns is their intolerable noisiness, which makes it a very hard matter to get a night's rest in them. If, unfortunately, there should be any asses in the court-yard of the establishment, you may as well make up your mind at once not to close your eyes, for these terrible animals, doubtless under pretence that music has always been held in honour in the Empire, think themselves obliged, as good Chinese subjects, to sing the whole night long, and yield to all the caprices of their philharmonic instincts.

In 1840, we were once making a journey in a waggon in the province of Pekin. Our equipage was under the guidance of one of our catechists, an old schoolmaster, mounted on a magnificent ass, so full of ardour and agility, that the two mules who completed our team had all the difficulty in the world to keep up with him. This ass, however, was so filled with the sense of his own superiority, and so proud of it, that whenever he became aware of the presence of any of his brethren, let them be at ever so great a distance, he never failed to begin boasting of it in such loud and sonorous tones, that his folly became quite insupportable. When we got to an inn, instead of trying to rest himself, this indefatigable beast passed the whole night in practising his music; and there appeared to be something so peculiarly provoking in the tones of his voice, that all the asses within hearing, influenced, it would seem, by the power of some magnetic fluid, were quite sure to respond in a magnificent bravura, so that altogether, it became impossible to close our eyes.

One evening, when our catechist was vaunting the qualities of

his ass, we could not help interrupting him. "Your ass," said we, "is an abominable brute. During the whole journey he has prevented our getting a wink of sleep."

"Why did not you tell me so before?" said the catechist; "I would soon have stopped his singing." As the ancient schoolmaster was somewhat of a wag, and indulged occasionally in a small joke, we took little notice of his reply, but that night we slept quite soundly.

"Well, did the ass make a noise last night?" said he, when we met in the morning.

"Perhaps not; at all events, we certainly did not hear him."

"No, no; I think not; I saw to that before I went to bed. You must have noticed," he continued, "that when an ass is going to bray, he always begins by raising his tail, and he keeps it extended horizontally as long as his song lasts. To insure his silence, therefore, you have only to tie a large stone to the end of his tail, so that he cannot raise it."

We smiled, without reply, thinking this was another piece of pleasantry; but he cried, "Come, now, and see; you can easily convince yourselves." And accordingly we followed him to the court-yard, where we beheld, sure enough, the poor ass with a large stone attached to his tail, and with the air of having entirely lost his accustomed spirits. His eyes were fixed on the ground, his ears hung down, his whole appearance denoted humility and dejection. We felt quite compassionate towards him, and begged his master to untie the stone directly; and, as soon as ever he felt his musical appendage at liberty, the creature raised, first his head, then his ears, then his tail, and at last began to bray with all his wonted enthusiasm.

CHAP. XIX.

Navigation of the Pou-yang. — Great Number of Junks. — Desert Tracts. — Pauperism in China. — Bands of Mendicants. — Society for gratuitous Coffins. — The King of the Beggars. — The Hen's Feathers Inn. — Causes of Pauperism. — Gaming. — Various Chinese Games. — Mode of eluding the Law against Gamblers. Drunkenness. — The Vine, Wine, and Corn Brandy. — Infanticide. — Its Causes. — Truth and Exaggeration concerning Infanticide in China. — Yu-yng-tang, or Foundling Hospital. — Edict against Infanticide. — Work of the Society of Holy Infancy.

Our navigation on the lake Pou-yang was performed without accident; but it was much slower than we had anticipated, for instead

of one day's journey we had two. We had not gone more than half way when the wind changed, and began to blow right a-head, so that we were compelled to make some long tacks. The weather continued fine, however, and the breeze, though contrary, was not of a nature to give us the smallest uneasiness. One day's delay was of no consequence; but we cannot say that passing another night on board the junk was quite so much a matter of indifference. The kakkerlacs made war upon us with the same fury as on the night before, but we got rid of this annoyance by having our beds carried up on deck, and lying down among the sailors—for their perpetual noise and gossip was, at any rate, less of a nuisance than the torments of the kakkerlacs.

During these two days we seldom saw land, and we could hardly persuade ourselves that we were really in the centre of the Chinese Empire. The immense extent of water—the long waves raised by the wind—the large vessels that were moving about in all directions, made it look more like a sea than a lake. The innumerable junks that are constantly ploughing the surface of the Pou-yang make really a very pretty sight. They are of very various construction, and the different points to which they are proceeding occasion a great variety in the arrangement of their sails. Some are going before the wind, with all their matting majestically displayed, others are struggling painfully with wind and wave, and great numbers crossing, rapidly, this way and that, in contrary directions, and looking like marine monsters chasing each other. The evolutions of all these floating machines were so swift and various that the picture changed every moment.

We might have gone by water as far as the capital of Kiang-si, for on leaving the lake Pou-yang, we entered the mouth of a navigable river that passes under the walls of *Nan-tchang-fou;* but with the wind and current against us, the navigation would have been too laborious and tedious.

We preferred, therefore, resuming, by land, the journey that was to bring us in two days to our third great halt.

The province of Kiang-si is regarded as one of the most populous in China, and we were therefore greatly surprised to observe on our route vast plains without cultivation, and without inhabitants, the wild and dreary aspect of which reminded us of the steppes and deserts of Mongolia. It is not uncommon in China to meet with desolate tracts of this kind, whether on account of the barrenness of the soil, or from the thoughtless carelessness of the people of the locality, who prefer seeking a more precarious subsistence from the chances of trade and navigation, to trusting to the peaceful labours of the

field. These fallow grounds are most common in the neighbourhood of the great lakes, and on the banks of rivers. The inhabitants leave the land when they can, and go and pass their lives in the boats, so that it has often been thought that notwithstanding the encouragement given to agriculture, China could yet supply more completely the wants of her inhabitants, or support a greater number of them.

It is certain that the Chinese Government does not know how to turn to account all the elements of abundance and riches that are met with in this magnificent country. An intelligent administration, zealous for the public good, by guiding judiciously this patient and industrious population, might develope prodigiously the immense resources of the Empire, and procure for the masses a much larger share of prosperity and comfort.

We will not venture to say it is easier in China than elsewhere completely to extinguish pauperism. In all the great centres of population, there will always be, unfortunately, many extremely poor, and the class of the necessitous will be always considerable. But the number of these might certainly be diminished; and we have noticed during our residence in China, that it is every year on the increase. This circumstance may, perhaps, help to explain the astonishing facility and rapid progress of the formidable insurrection that is threatening, at this moment, totally to overthrow this colossal Empire.

At all epochs, and in the most flourishing and best governed countries, there always have been, and there always will be, poor: but unquestionably there can be found in no other country such a depth of disastrous poverty as in the Celestial Empire. Not a year passes in which a terrific number of persons do not perish of famine in some part or other of China; and the multitude of those who live merely from day to day is incalculable. Let a drought, an inundation, or any accident whatever, occur to injure the harvest in a single province, and two thirds of the population are immediately reduced to a state of starvation. You see them then forming themselves into numerous bands — perfect armies of beggars — and proceeding together, men, women, and children, to seek in the towns and villages for some little nourishment wherewith to sustain, for a brief interval, their miserable existence. Many fall down fainting by the wayside, and die before they can reach the place where they had hoped to find help. You see their bodies lying in the fields, and at the road-side, and you pass without taking much notice of them, — so familiar is the horrid spectacle.

In 1849, we were stopped for six months in a Christian commu-

nity of the province of Tche-kiang, first by the torrents of rain that fell, and then by a general inundation over all that part of the country. It had the appearance of a vast sea, on the surface of which trees and villages were floating. The Chinese, who foresaw already the destruction of the harvest, and all the horrors of famine, displayed the most remarkable industry and perseverance in struggling against the misfortune from which they were suffering. After having tried to raise dykes round their fields, they next attempted to drain off the water by which they were filled; but just when they seemed on the point of succeeding in their difficult and toilsome undertaking, the rain again came pouring down, and their fields were once more covered. For three whole months we witnessed their unceasing industry; their labours were never discontinued for a moment. The unfortunate creatures, standing in mud and water up to their hips, were occupied, day and night, in working at their chain pumps, in order to turn into the beds of the rivers and canals the waters that were desolating the country. The inundation could not be mastered, however; and after all their exhausting labour, the poor sufferers were compelled to abandon the cultivation of their fields, and found themselves in a complete state of destitution. Then they began to assemble in great bands, and wander about the province with bags on their backs, begging here and there for a little rice. They were hideous to look at; half covered with rags, their hair bristling, their features contracted, their lips livid; and these but lately peaceful and industrious peasants were evidently driven by despair to be ready for every excess.

The Christian community in which we lived was several times visited by these famishing hordes; and though we were but little richer than they, it was necessary to retrench something even from our necessities, in order to be able to bestow a few handfuls of rice on them. Whole villages were abandoned, and numerous families went to seek a subsistence in the neighbouring provinces.

Calamities of this kind occur every year in some place or other; and those who have made any savings are able to get through the crisis, and wait for better days; but the others, who are always in much greater numbers, have no choice but to expatriate themselves, or die of famine.

Besides these local and accidental miseries, there is also what may be called a fixed and permanent pauperism, which like an incurable leprosy extends its ravages over the whole nation. In the great towns the multitude of paupers is terrific. You see them continually, crawling through the streets, displaying their defor-

mities, their hideous wounds, their dislocated limbs, to excite public commiseration. Every day many are starved to death.

The Chinese who are in easy circumstances do not object to bestow a few sapecks in alms, but they know nothing of the feeling of charity that induces any one to interest themselves in the poor—to love them, and compassionate their distresses. They give a handful of rice, or a piece of money, to the sick and unfortunate, merely to rid themselves of their presence; but further than this, no one troubles himself about these miserable creatures, or inquires whether they have any corner in which to obtain shelter to pass a night. The poor have no home; they go and crouch somewhere about the tribunals or pagodas, or they lie along the ramparts, where they construct wretched little hovels with fragments of matting that they have picked up on the wayside.

The Chinese, so ready and skilful at organising every kind of society that has any commercial or industrial object in view, or even for resisting thieves, or the enticements of the gaming-table, have never yet formed any benevolent society for the solace of the sick and the unfortunate, with the single exception of a society to provide coffins gratis for the dead who have no relatives to undertake their funerals.

As for this, though it is scarcely allowable to scrutinise the motives of those who perform any good action, it is impossible not to doubt whether at bottom this does not owe its origin to a self-interested motive. It is a superstition among the Chinese that the souls of the dead are often changed into evil spirits, devils, who take pleasure in tormenting the living, in creating diseases in them, or interfering with them in various ways to their prejudice. The best means of averting the malignant influences of these evil disposed spirits, who are mostly so implacable against the living, because their bodies have been deprived of sepulture, is of course to buy coffins for those who die without having the means of obtaining burial. This benevolent attention cannot, it is supposed, fail to dispose them favourably towards the members of the society for gratuitous coffins. With the exception of this, we have never heard in China of any society, instituted with the purpose of providing for the wants of the indigent.

If, however, the opulent classes neglect to associate for the benefit of the poor, the poor do not fail in retribution to form companies for taking advantage of the rich. Every one brings to the common stock some infirmity real or supposed, and this formidable capital of human misery is turned as far as possible to profitable account. The poor are formed into companies, regiments, and battalions, and

this great army of paupers has a chief, who bears the title of "King of the Beggars," and who is actually recognised by the State. He is responsible for the conduct of his tattered subjects, and it is on him the blame is laid when any disorders occur among them that are too outrageous and dangerous to public peace to be endured. The King of the Beggars at Pekin is a real power. There are certain days on which he is authorised to send into the country some of his numerous phalanxes and bid them ask alms, or rather maraud all over the environs of the capital. The pencil of Callot would be necessary to paint the burlesque, disorderly, scandalous appearance of this army of vagabonds, marching proudly to the conquest of some village. Whilst they swarm about like some devastating insects, and seek by their insolence to intimidate every one they meet, their king calls a meeting of the principal inhabitants, and proposes for a certain sum to deliver them from the hideous invasion. After a long dispute, the contracting parties come to an agreement, the village pays its ransom, and the beggars decamp to go and pour down like an avalanche upon some other place.

These hordes sometimes reap tolerably abundant harvests in their expeditions, but everything goes first into the hands of the king, and he afterwards makes the distribution among his subjects, who, without having read a line of Cabet, or Victor Considérant, appear to have made great progress in their theories. These grand new ideas are not monopolised by Europeans, and many people will no doubt feel somewhat humiliated on being told that the Asiatics, the Chinese even, have been for a long time reducing to practice opinions supposed to have burst forth but yesterday from the powerful brains of the philosophers of the West.

There exists at Pekin a phalanstery which surpasses in eccentricity all that the fertile imagination of Fourier could have conceived. It is called Ki-mao-fan, that is, "House of the Hen's Feathers." By dint of carrying out the laws of progress, the Chinese have found means to furnish to the poorest of the community a warm feather-bed, for the small consideration of one fifth of a farthing per night. This marvellous establishment is simply composed of one great hall, and the floor of this great hall is covered over its whole extent by one vast thick layer of feathers. Mendicants and vagabonds who have no other domicile come to pass the night in this immense dormitory. Men, women, and children, old and young, all without exception, are admitted. Communism prevails in the full force and rigour of the expression. Every one settles himself and makes his nest as well as he

can for the night in this ocean of feathers; when day dawns he must quit the premises, and an officer of the company stands at the door to receive the rent of one sapeck each for the night's lodging. In deference no doubt to the principle of equality, half-places are not allowed, and a child must pay the same as a grown person.

On the first establishment of this eminently philanthropic and moral institution, the managers of it used to furnish each of the guests with a covering, but it was found necessary to modify this regulation, for the communist company got into the habit of carrying off their coverlets to sell them, or to supply an additional garment during the rigorous cold of winter. The shareholders saw that this would never do, and they should be ruined, yet to give no covering at all would have been too cruel, and scarcely decent. It was necessary therefore to find some method of reconciling the interests of the establishment with the comfort of the guests, and the way in which the problem was solved was this.

An immense felt coverlet, of such gigantic dimensions as to cover the whole dormitory, was made, and in the day time suspended to the ceiling like a great canopy. When everybody had gone to bed, that is to say, had laid down upon the feathers, the counterpane was let down by pulleys, the precaution having been previously taken to make a number of holes in it for the sleepers to put their heads through, in order to escape the danger of suffocation. As soon as it is daylight, the phalansterian coverlet is hoisted up again, after a signal has been made on the tam-tam to awaken those who are asleep, and invite them to draw their heads back into the feathers, in order not to be caught by the neck and hoisted into the air with the coverlet. This immense swarm of beggars is then seen crawling about in the sea of dirty feathers and inserting themselves again into their miserable rags, preparatory to gathering into groups and dispersing about the various quarters of the town to seek by lawful or unlawful means their scanty subsistence.

Amongst the principal causes of pauperism in China may be mentioned, besides the excessive carelessness of the Government and the exuberance of the population, gambling, drunkenness and debauchery. These vices of course are not peculiar to China; they have been known in all ages and countries, and have always brought disorder and misery in their train. It is true, however, that the Chinese give themselves up to them with a passion never exceeded among any nation that has ever existed.

Gaming is prohibited by the laws of the Empire, but all legislation on this subject has been overpowered by the habits of the

people, and China is now in fact one vast gaming-house. Chinese games are very numerous; they play at cards, chess, draughts, dice, and tsei-mei, a game similar to the Italian morra. He who loses is obliged to pay a cup of brandy. The Chinese are also passionately fond of cock-fights as well as of combats between crickets, grasshoppers, &c., and these interesting amusements always give occasion to wagers, often to a considerable amount. Habitual gamblers prefer cards and dice; they assemble both in private houses and in public establishments, a good deal like our *cafés*, except that nothing but tea is drunk in them. There they pass days and nights, playing with so much passion, that they scarcely give themselves time even to take their food. There is not a village that has not its gaming-house, and its professed gamesters.

The Chinese are, as we have said, industrious and economical, but their cupidity, their immoderate love of lucre, and their decided taste for stockjobbing and speculation, easily tempts them to gambling, when they are not engaged in traffic. They seek eagerly for strong excitements, and when once they have got into the habit of gambling they seldom or never recover from it. They cast aside every obligation of station, duty, and family, to live only for cards and dice; and this fatal passion gains such an empire over them, that they proceed even to the most revolting extremities. When they have lost all their money, they will play for their houses, their land, and their wives even, whose destiny often depends on a cast of the dice. Nay, the Chinese gambler does not stop here, for he will stake the very clothes he has on for one game more, and this horrible custom gives rise to scenes that would not be credible, did we not know that the passions always tend to render men cruel and inhuman.

In the northern provinces, especially in the environs of the Great Wall, you may sometimes meet, during the most intense cold of winter, men running about in a state of complete nudity, having been driven pitilessly from the gaming houses when they had lost their all. They rush about in all directions like madmen to try and save themselves from being frozen, or crouch down against the chimneys, which in those countries are carried along the walls of the houses, on a level with the ground. They turn first one side towards the warmth, then the other, while their gambling companions, far from trying to help them, look on with ferocious and malignant hilarity. The horrible spectacle seldom lasts long, for the cold soon seizes the unfortunate creatures, and they fall down and die. The gamblers then return to their table, and begin

to play again with the most perfect composure. Such facts as these will appear fabulous to many persons, but having resided several years in the north of China, we can testify to their perfect authenticity.

These excesses seem surprising enough, but the truth is, that Chinese gamblers have invented still more extraordinary methods of satisfying their passion, which is really carried to absolute madness. Those who have nothing more to lose will collect round a table and actually play for *their fingers*, which they will cut off reciprocally with frightful stoicism. We had thought to pass over these revolting particulars, for we do not like to put the confidence of our readers to too great a trial. We have a strong objection to relating things that, although we know them to be strictly true, have an improbable appearance. But these facts concerning Chinese gamblers were known, and commented upon, by the Arab travellers in the ninth century. Here is a passage on the subject from the "Chain of Chronicles," from which we have already quoted more than once: —

"Amongst men of a volatile and boastful character, those who belong to the lower classes, and who have no money, will sometimes play for the fingers of their hands. During the game, they keep by them a vase containing nut, or sesame oil, for olive oil is not known in this country. A fire is kept burning under it, and between the two players is placed a small but very sharp hatchet. The one who wins then takes the hand of the loser, places it on a stone, and cuts off one of his fingers with the hatchet; the piece falls, and the vanquished party immediately dips his hand into the hot oil, which cauterises the wound. This operation does not prevent the players from beginning again. Some will take a match, dip it in oil, place it on their arms, and set fire to it; the match burns, and you can smell the odour of the consuming flesh, but the man goes on with his game, and exhibits no sign of pain."

All players, as may be supposed, do not cut off their fingers and roast their arms, and even in China gambling is not always carried to these insane excesses; but throughout the Empire it is the cause of great misery, and nothing is more common than to see numerous families reduced to wretched indigence by the consequences of a few games of cards or dice. The evil has become so general, that the laws are powerless against it. In vain do the magistrates make eloquent proclamations against gamblers, and quote passages from the most celebrated moralists, in support of their fine speeches; nobody plays a game the less in any province of the Empire. The magistrates themselves, in some measure,

teach the people to disregard the laws; they often visit the villages under pretence of seeking for gamblers, when in fact they are insuring them perfect impunity, simply on condition of being paid for their connivance. On their arrival, a good dinner is given to them, as well as a larger or smaller ingot of silver; and then they continue their tour, after having duly exhorted the villagers to persevere in the observance of the five social duties.

We once knew a Mandarin who objected to have money offered to him when he went on a search for gamblers. His sentiments were so noble, so elevated, that the mere idea of receiving a present from the people under his jurisdiction excited his anger and indignation. He loved money, nevertheless. How could he have been a Mandarin if he did not? He liked to get it, but he was particular about having it offered in a manner that should not wound the delicacy of his sentiments. When he came to a place, he always managed to make it understood what sum he was to receive, and then the way was, for the principal person in the town, or village to invite him to take tea, and after that, to play a game or two; at which games the Mandarin was to be allowed to win. But it was necessary for those who played with him to affect to be paying great attention, and trying to get the game, for this worthy magistrate was not satisfied unless he had the gain and the glory too, and chose to have both his pockets filled and his skill admired.

The passion for gambling has now invaded all classes of society in China; men, women, and children — everybody plays — but the lower classes are certainly the most inveterate and determined gamblers. In almost every street of a great town, you meet little ambulatory gaming-tables; a pair of dice in a cup placed upon a stool form an almost irresistible attraction to the workman returning from his daily labour, and when once he has yielded to the temptations of this fascinating display, he finds it afterwards still more difficult to withstand them. He often loses the whole of his hard earnings in a few hours. Children, too, crowd round the tables as eagerly as their parents, and the old people are very often the first to urge them down the abyss from which they can scarcely ever rise again.

Drunkenness is also in China a cause of pauperism, scarcely less efficient than the passion for gaming; but this vice does not create quite as much misery in the south as in the north of the Empire, though the case is the reverse with the passion for gaming, as the southern Chinese drink less but play more. It is, of course, not their habitual beverage — tea — that intoxicates them,

but a variety of alcoholic liquors which are very popular, and within every one's reach.

The grape has been known in China, and celebrated from the remotest antiquity. The learned assert that the descriptions of the Imperial Gardens in the Tcheou-ky—a work attributed to the celebrated Tcheou-long, who ascended the throne in the year 1122 before Christ — can only refer to the vine ; and however this may be, there is no doubt that there were many vines in the provinces of Chen-si and Chan-si ages before the Christian era. The historian Sse-ma-tsien speaks of a certain rich man who had a vineyard so considerable that he made every year 10,000 measures of wine. "The wine of grapes," he adds, "having the property of keeping many years, it used to be put into urns and buried." At this time wine was very common, and caused a good deal of mischief. The numerous songs composed under the dynasties of the Yuen and Han are a proof that the Chinese have not always disdained the juice of the grape ; and the Emperor Ouen-ty has sung of it with a lyric enthusiasm worthy of Anacreon or Horace.

According to the testimony of the Annals, the vine, like everything else in China, has undergone many revolutions. When at various times the Government has given orders for cutting down the trees, the multitude of which was supposed to injure the corn, the vine has not been excepted; on the contrary, it has sometimes been specially pointed out, and pitilessly sacrificed to the culture of cereals. Under some reigns the extirpation of the vine was so complete in certain provinces, that the very remembrance of it was lost; and subsequently, when permission was given to plant it again, you might suppose, from the manner in which some historians express themselves, that the vine was becoming known for the first time. This is probably what gave rise to the idea that the vine was only cultivated in China at a comparatively recent period, and that it came from the West, though it is really indisputable that it was known to the Chinese long before the Christian era. The Annals contain accounts of various species that were brought from Samarcand, Persia, Thibet, Tourfan, Hami, and other countries, with which China has had relations. It would even be easy to show that grape wine was in use under every dynasty, and every reign to the 15th century. At present there still exists in China several excellent kinds of grapes, and the three first of the Mantchoo Emperors, Khang-hi, Yoang-tching, and Khien-long, sent for a great number of new plants from foreign countries, and have in their works taken credit to themselves for doing so. The Chinese of our day, however, do not cultivate the vine on a large scale,

and do not make wine of grapes; the fruit is only gathered for eating either fresh or dried. The immense population of China, and the consequent necessity of reserving the land for food, occasions the vine to be neglected, and its products regarded as objects of luxury.

In default of grape wine, the Chinese manufacture a spirituous liquor from corn, and make a great consumption of it. The most commonly used is that obtained from the fermentation of rice. It is a kind of beer, the taste of which is sometimes very agreeable; that of the best quality comes from Chao-hing, in the province of Tche-kiang. As it is made from rice, the Europeans resident at Macao and Canton generally pronounce it detestable; but they are always disposed to judge *à priori* of Chinese productions. One day we took it into our heads to fill some bottles with it, and, having first sealed them with great care, we offered them to an English connoisseur in wine. He tasted, and not only found it excellent, but discovered that it was the produce of some celebrated vintage in Spain.

He served it at dessert to some of his countrymen, who pronounced a high eulogium upon it, and perceived in it the true flavour and *bouquet* of Spanish wines.

It must be owned, however, that this rice wine was of quite exceptional quality; that which is drunk commonly in China is not very agreeable, and though containing but little alcohol, easily gets into your head. The Chinese were acquainted with this manufacture at least twenty centuries before the Christian era.

In order to procure the fermentation of the rice, they place it in large jars, and mix it with a certain leaven, to which they give the name of "mother of wine." This leaven is made with the flour of good wheat, in which all the bran has been left. This flour is mixed with warm water, and then kneaded into a mass rather firmer than bread dough. It is then placed in wooden moulds, and made into masses of the shape of a brick, and weighing four or five pounds. These are ranged on a board, and placed in a chamber hermetically closed, and left to ferment. The makers know when the fermentation is finished by a reddish colour reaching the centre of the loaves. They are then exposed to the air to dry, and in this state become articles of commerce. When this yeast has been properly made it is rather better for being old, and even the maggots that get into it do it no great harm, though the makers try to keep them off by placing aromatic herbs between the loaves. The preparation of this yeast requires great care and practice; and the goodness of the wine depends on the quality of

the yeast employed. In the north of China millet is used instead of rice. The "mother of wine" being only corn-flour fermented, acidified and dried, it may be made equally well with oats, rye, or barley; and the flour of peas or beans is sometimes mixed with it, as well as odoriferous herbs, almonds, the leaves and bark of trees, and fruits dried and reduced to powder. Every locality has a different receipt.

Corn brandy was not known in China at so ancient a date as wine. The use of it does not seem to have been earlier than the end of the 13th century. Before that epoch the Chinese were not acquainted with the process of distillation. The first person, it is said, who made corn brandy was only trying to correct the bad taste of some old wine, by passing it through a still, and he was much surprised to find that his process had produced a spirit. For a long time spirits were only made from wine, and the possibility of making alcohol from grain was found out by a mere chance. A peasant of the province of Chang-tong, who wished to make a large quantity of wine, found that the millet had not been properly stirred, and that instead of fermenting it had become mouldy. Not being able, therefore, to use it for wine, he thought he would try and make brandy of it, and his experiment succeeded perfectly. Since then his method has been adopted, and a great many useless manipulations thus spared.

The brandies of the north are made principally with large millet (*holcus sorghum*). There exist considerable manufactories where its product is passed several times through the still, and thus obtains the strength and energy of alcohol. These liquors always retain an unpleasant taste; but it may be got rid of by macerating green fruits or aromatic herbs in them. The Chinese, however, do not care about these niceties; they drink it with avidity; and they are so little in the habit of drinking anything cold, that they have even their brandy served up to them smoking hot. At the inns they bring and place on the table of their guests, a little urn filled with brandy, and a miniature tripod, in the centre of which is a small china bowl. Into this they pour some spirit, and set light to it, and then place the urn upon it; so that you have the pleasure of keeping your alcohol hot as long as you remain at table.

This horrible drink is the delight of the Chinese, and especially of those of the north, who swallow it like water. Many ruin themselves with brandy, as others do with gaming. In company, or even alone, they will pass whole days and nights in drinking successive little cups of it, until their intoxication makes them in-

capable of carrying the cup to their lips. When this passion has once seized on the head of a family, poverty, with all its lugubrious train, very soon makes its entrance into the house.

It is unfortunately the custom for the distilleries to supply brandy on credit for a whole year, so that a tippler may go on for a long time drawing from this inexhaustible spring. His troubles will only begin in the last moon — the legal period of payment. Then indeed he must pay, and with usury ; and as money does not usually become more plentiful with a man from the habit of getting drunk every day, he has to sell his house and his land, if he have any, or to carry his furniture and his clothes to the pawnbroker's.

One can hardly imagine what pleasure the Chinese find in imbibing these burning drinks, which are absolutely like liquid fire, and, moreover, very ill tasted. But many instances have been mentioned to us of their having died a fiery death for the sake of it; of men who have absorbed such a quantity of alcohol as to have become fairly saturated with it, and to have, in a manner, exhaled it at every pore. The slightest accident then, perhaps in merely lighting a pipe, has been sufficient to envelope in flames and consume these wretched creatures. We have not ourselves witnessed any occurrence of the kind, but many persons, on whom we can place the most perfect reliance, have assured us that it is far from uncommon in this country.

The Chinese law prohibits the fabrication of rice-wine and spirits, on the ground that corn ought to be taken the greatest care of, in a country where all the labour and industry of the inhabitants is scarcely sufficient to supply the food required for the immense population. But these laws are pretty much like those that prohibit gaming — a perfect dead letter ; a fee to the Mandarin removes all difficulties. The large establishments called *Chao-kouo* require a permission from the Government to distil brandy ; and this is sold to them only on condition that they shall employ in their distilleries nothing but grain that is spoiled, and unfit for any other purpose. But that does not form the slightest hindrance to their using the very best grain the harvest produces.

Gambling and drunkenness, then, are the two permanent causes of pauperism in China; but there is a third, still more disastrous.

Chinese society has a certain tone of decency and reserve that may very well impose on those who look only at the surface, and judge merely by the momentary impression ; but a very short residence among the Chinese is sufficient to show that their virtue is entirely external ; their public morality is but a mask worn over

the corruption of their manners. We will take care not to lift the unclean veil that hides the putrefaction of this ancient Chinese civilisation ; the leprosy of vice has spread so completely through this sceptical society, that the varnish of modesty with which it is covered is continually falling off and exposing the hideous wounds which are eating away the vitals of this unbelieving people. Their language is already revoltingly indecent, and the slang of the worst resorts of licentiousness threatens to become the ordinary language of conversation. There are some provinces in which the inns, on the road have apartments entirely papered with representations of all kinds of shameless debauchery, and these abominable pictures are known among the Chinese by the pretty name of "flowers."

The ravages of pauperism, it may well be supposed, must be terrible in a society in which gambling, drunkenness, and libertinism are thus largely developed ; and, in fact, there do exist countless multitudes perpetually stagnating in vice and misery, and always ready to enrol themselves under the banners of theft and highway robbery. To this pauperism especially, we believe, is to be ascribed the monstrous crime of infanticide, so common in China, and for the prevention of which the charity of Europe, and particularly of France, has been so deeply interested. Of late years lively discussions have arisen upon this lamentable subject. On one hand, an attempt has been made to deny the fact — which is mere folly — and on the other, it has unquestionably been greatly exaggerated ; as it mostly happens in cases of dispute, where so few people stop calmly at the point of truth. Many accounts sent from China have also served to embroil the controversy ; and there has been, in our opinion, far too much generalisation from the facts ascertained. It is worth while to try and find what is really true and what false, in this monstrous barbarity with which the Chinese nation is reproached. We will first quote some passages from a letter of Mons. Delaplace, who for seven years exercised his apostolic zeal in the missions of China.

"Some persons ask whether it is true that infanticide is of every-day occurrence in China. Although my voice may not go for much, I can add it to the crowd of others to assure you that thousands — millions — of infants perish in the waters of the rivers, or in the jaws of beasts. The letters of missionaries that I have read in the Annals generally assign as the cause of this barbarity the misconduct of parents, the trouble and burden of a numerous family, or simply caprice and custom. This is but too true, and I have witnessed the deplorable effects of these things

both at Macao and in the other districts that I have visited during the past five years. But it seems to me that to all these causes must be added that of superstition, for it is that which occasions more frightful, more irretrievable ravages than all the rest. If the other missionaries do not speak of it, it may be that the evil is not so striking in their parts of the country as it is here; or that since the custom originates in superstition, they may merely comprise under this head whatever proceeds from it. However this may be, you may receive what I have told you as from an eye-witness; but remember that my observations apply only to the province of Ho-nan, where they were made. I cannot pretend to affirm anything concerning all China, where every province has a language, customs, and superstitions peculiar to itself.

"The Chinese of whom I speak, that is to say, nearly all the pagans of Ho-nan, believe in the metempsychosis. According to their notions, every man has three *houen*. What is a houen? you will say; and the question is not easy to answer; for the idea attached to this word is very vague; but it may be said to signify mind, spirit, vitality. Every individual, then, has three houen, and at the death of their possessor one of them migrates into another body, the other remains in the family, that is the domestic houen; and the third reposes in the tomb. To this last papers are burnt, as a sort of sacrifice; to the domestic houen, which has its abode in the tablet, amongst the characters engraved upon it, sticks of perfume are burned, and funeral repasts offered. These honours paid, the family make themselves easy; the houen is appeased, and what is there to fear?

"Such are the measures to be taken with respect to those who die at a mature age; but what is to be done for children? Custom does not permit the raising tablets to them, or rendering them any kind of worship, as their houen is not supposed to be perfect; but, although incomplete, it still exists; and in its imperfect state is still more to be dreaded than that of grown men; nothing can be done to pay it honour, and yet its anger is to be dreaded. They get out of this dilemma by a true Chinese method; that is to say, they endeavour to trick and deceive the houen. When a child is very ill, in fact, in its last agony, they contrive matters so that the houen, as it leaves the body shall not know the family from which it has proceeded. They take the poor little dying creature, and throw it into the water, or abandon it in some remote spot, or bury it alive. Then the houen will be angry indeed; but will take vengeance on the fish, or the beast of the field, and the family is saved. If the thing did not turn one sick with dis-

gust and horror, one might laugh at the precautions taken to deceive the houen.

"The person appointed to carry away the poor dying child does not proceed in a straight line, but zigzag; going a little one way, then turning back and walking in an opposite direction; now east, and now west, describing a number of triangles, one upon another, in order that in this labyrinth of broken lines, the houen may not be able to find its way, in case it should be inclined to return to its former home.

"Is not this pitiable, deplorable? Such is actually the reason why so many children are cast upon the highways, and they are least unfortunate who are merely abandoned: their lives may be sometimes prolonged or even saved, but others are sometimes immolated in a more cruel manner.

"In the month of June last, a pagan of the neighbourhood (about a mile from my house) seeing his child ill, dispatched it himself with his hatchet; his idea being that the houen of this child would fasten upon another, and that all his children would die. It was necessary, therefore, to torment the houen, and in such a way that it should have no desire to lodge any more under his roof.

"Others, from a different motive, but one derived from the same strange superstition, exercise the same cruelties. The houen is regarded by them as a sort of evil spirit that desires to torture human creatures. A new-born infant, dying so young, has not afforded the houen sufficient means of slaking its thirst for barbarity. They must, therefore, do what they can to satisfy it, as long as a breath remains in the little body. The houen, once satisfied, will cease to torment the family. Here, therefore, is another dying child to be hacked to pieces; and two rules are to be observed in the operation; first, it must be cut into three portions, the one composed of the head and breast, the second of the trunk and thighs, the third of the legs and feet; secondly, it must be the father or mother who shall thus mangle their own offspring. Do you believe these horrors? I am certain that many even among the missionaries have never heard them mentioned, and I repeat that it is very possible that they may not be common all over China. It may even be that the kind of people with whom I have come in contact during the last three years, and the district of country I have traversed may be exceptional even in Ho-nan. But be assured that I am writing to you deplorable truths — truths so much the more deplorable, that we cannot, for the reasons above stated, even come near these poor little victims to bestow on

them the gift of baptism. All is done in secret between the father and mother, who reserve for themselves this ferocious privilege.

"Since we are upon this subject, I will unveil to you another horror; I say unveil, for it is most probably new to you; you must have been in some such situation as I have found myself in, to become acquainted with it:—

"A man of a tolerably opulent family, a pagan of course, had for his two first children successively two daughters. He wished to know whether he should have a son. Can you guess what he did to find it out? He took a *tcha-dze*, a kind of cleaver used to chop up straw for the food of animals, and having laid his little daughter on the ground, he placed her neck under the blade of the instrument, and pressed it down with all his strength, examining very attentively the while in what way the blood issued from the gash, for on that depended the presage. If it flowed gently along the cleaver, it was a proof that it had no virtue and energy left, and consequently could only expect in future to have daughters. If, on the contrary, it spouted out, and especially if it touched the knees of the infant, then, indeed, vital strength was displayed in it, and he would be certain to obtain a boy. This custom was surely the invention of him who has been called 'a murderer from the beginning.' Oh pagans! true children of the demon, who delight in blood, even as he does, when will your hearts be moved by the charity of Jesus Christ?"

We have chosen this letter in preference to many others that we might have taken from the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith and of the "Holy Infancy," because we were intimately acquainted with its author, and know that though his feelings are lively, he is a man of the most perfect prudence and discretion, and would assuredly never write down any facts without having inquired thoroughly into their authenticity. He is careful, we see, to observe that the district where these atrocities took place may form an exception, not only to China in general, but even to the province of Ho-nan. He refrains from generalising upon what he has seen or heard, even from persons most worthy of credit. Unfortunately, this wise caution is not always observed by those who speak of China; it is quite common for them to put down the act of a single individual to the account of three hundred millions, and make the whole Chinese Empire responsible for what passes in a single district. This is one great cause of the numerous prejudices that exist in Europe on the subject of the Chinese.

In the part of the country alluded to by M. Delaplace, some, it

seems, hack their children to pieces to torment the houen, and prevent its wishing to return to them; others hack them up also, but with the view of sending the houen away content and pleased. We can hardly expect to find much logic in heads crazed with such superstitions; but it is still possible that these facts may be exceptional, and of very rare occurrence. We have ourselves, during our many journeys and our long residence in China, never heard of these horrid practices.

As for ordinary infanticide—the suffocation and drowning of infants—they are innumerable, more common, unquestionably, than in any other place in the world, and their principal cause is pauperism. From the information we have collected in various provinces, it appears that persons in embarrassed circumstances kill their new-born female children in the most pitiless manner. The birth of a male child in a family is an honour and a blessing; but the birth of a girl is regarded as a calamity, especially with necessitous parents. A boy is soon able to work and help his parents, who count upon his support for their old age; the family is continued also by a boy, and a new link added to the genealogical chain. A girl, on the contrary, is a mere burden. According to Chinese manners, she must remain shut up till the period of her marriage, and she cannot exercise any kind of industry, by which she might make amends to her parents for the expenses she occasions. It is therefore the girls only that are murdered, as they are regarded as causes of indigence. In certain localities, where the culture of cotton and the breeding of silkworms furnish young girls with suitable occupations, they are allowed to live, and the parents are even unwilling to see them marry and enter another family. Interest is the supreme motive of the Chinese, even in cases where the heart alone ought to have influence.

Must, then, the frequency of infanticide in China lead to the conclusion that the Chinese, as a nation, are barbarous, ferocious, regardless of the lives of those to whom they have given birth? We think not. There are, of course, degraded men to be found among them; men who shrink from no atrocity; and even of the Chinese in general, it may be said with truth, that they easily fall into vice, and commit crimes. But can we be surprised at this? Should we not, on the contrary, have cause for surprise if it were otherwise? What motive can be capable of arresting the force of passion in men without any religious belief, in whom self-interest is the only rule of good and evil, who live in a sceptical society, under atheistical laws, whose only sanction is the rod and the gallows? When we consider what takes place among Christian

nations, we shall see that we have not quite so much room to cry out about pagans. If there is anything to be surprised at, it is that they have not made greater progress in evil. Christianity has ennobled human blood, and inspired an infinite respect for human life. Among Christians, religion, laws, national manners, all protect the lives of children as much as those of grown-up persons, and nevertheless, infanticide, and wilful abortion, which is anticipated infanticide, are by no means unknown. Notwithstanding the severity of the laws, the vigilance of magistrates, and the precautions of every kind with which the lives of new-born infants are surrounded, crimes of this nature are continually engaging the attention of justice, and leaving room to imagine that those that remain unknown must attain a still more frightful amount. Need we wonder, then, that infanticides should be common in China, where the law gives the father such absolute power over the life of the child, and where there are not, as among us, numerous institutions of Christian charity, to collect these poor, forsaken little ones, and tend them with pious solicitude? Let the Foundling Hospitals, the Houses of Refuge of various kinds, be suppressed, and it will soon be seen whether the most civilised, gentle, and charitable people of Europe, whose benevolence watches over the misfortunes and miseries of the whole world, would not present a spectacle not very different from that now seen in China. What we have just been relating of the Chinese has a strong resemblance to what, it appears, was passing in Paris in the time of St. Vincent de Paul.

"The city of Paris being of such an immense extent, and its inhabitants almost innumerable, there occur among them many disorders which it is not always possible to prevent; and among these one of the most pernicious is the exposure and abandonment of new-born infants, whose unnatural mothers, or other inhuman persons, not only place their lives, but also their souls, in peril, by not attempting to procure for them the baptism that might bring them into a state of salvation.

"No year passes in which three or four hundred are not found exposed in the city and suburbs, and according to the orders of the police, it is the business of the commissioners of the Châtelet to pick up these forsaken children, and take notes of the place and the circumstances in which they are found. They used formerly to carry them to a house called *La Couche*, in the Rue St. Landry, where they were received by a certain widow, who lived there, with one or two servants, and undertook the charge of them; but not being able to attend to so great a number, or keep nurses to

suckle them, or bring up those who were weaned, for want of sufficient funds, the greater part of these poor children perished; and sometimes the attendants, to escape the annoyance of their cries, gave them drugs to put them to sleep that killed them. Those who escaped this danger were given to anybody that came to ask for them, and sold for the smallest sums, even for as little as twenty *sous*. They were brought in this way sometimes to make them suck diseased women, whose corrupt milk soon killed them; or to introduce as supposititious children into families, or with various bad intentions. There are cases, horrible to relate, in which they have been bought in order to make use of them in magical and diabolical operations; so that it seems these poor innocents were all condemned to death, or something worse. There was not one that escaped misfortune, for there was no one who took the least care for their preservation; and what is still more deplorable, many died without baptism; this widow having declared that she had never caused any one of them to be baptized."

"This disorder, so strange in a city so wealthy, so well provided with police, so Christian as Paris, touched the heart of M. Vincent, when it became known to him; but not seeing very well what was to be done, he spoke to some of the ladies of Charity, and begged them to go to the house, not to discover the evil, for it was already well known, but to see whether it was not possible to provide a remedy for it." *

This, then, is the way in which, in the time of St. Vincent de Paul, infants were treated in this wealthy, Christian, and well-ordered city of Paris. Need we, then, be surprised to hear of infanticides among the miserably destitute lower classes of China?

In the accounts of missionaries, it has frequently been stated, that it is common in China to see the bodies of infants floating on the waters of the lakes and rivers, or lying on the road, and becoming the prey of unclean animals. We are convinced of the perfect correctness of these accounts; but it must not be supposed that the custom is quite so general that you cannot take a walk without seeing the body of some infant in the jaws of dogs or hogs. That would be a great mistake, and we feel it as a duty to declare, that during more than ten years that we were in the habit of travelling about China in all directions by land and water, we never saw the body of a single forsaken infant, and we certainly did not go along with our eyes shut. We repeat, never-

* Life of St. Vincent de Paul, by Louis Abelly, vol. i. p. 143.

theless, that we are quite certain the fact does occur, and we should even be surprised if it did not, for this reason among others.

There are in China no places set apart for cemeteries, as there are in Europe; every family inters its own dead on its own ground, and burials are consequently very expensive, and persons not in good circumstances are often much embarrassed for the means of rendering the accustomed funeral honours to their relatives. When the deceased is a father or a mother, all imaginable sacrifices must be made to obtain a coffin and a suitable funeral. But with respect to dead children there is not the same anxiety, and parents already poor will not reduce themselves to mendicity for the sake of burying them. They content themselves therefore with wrapping the body in a piece of matting, and placing it in the current of a river, in the ravine of some solitary mountains, or even occasionally with leaving it on the roadside, and it is then far from impossible that it may become the prey of beasts, but it would be wrong to conclude, when a body is seen under such circumstances, that it had always been left exposed while living, though that may happen sometimes, especially in the case of female infants of whom the parents wish to rid themselves, but may sometimes hope perhaps that others will take them.

In the great cities you see near the ramparts crypts intended to receive the dead bodies of infants whom the parents have no means of burying. They are thrown into these wells, and from time to time quick-lime is thrown in also to consume them. There have been instances of unnatural parents throwing girls alive into these pits, but it is gross exaggeration to say that they are filled with living infants whose cries are heard afar off. When the imagination is powerfully excited, people hear many things not to be heard by any one else.

At Pekin, every day just before morning dawns, five carts, each drawn by an ox, traverse the five districts of the town; namely, the north, south, east, west, and centre. A signal is made of the passage of the cart, and those who have children dead or living that they wish to put away, bring them out, and give them to the driver. The dead are thrown into the above-mentioned pit, the living carried to an asylum named *Yu-yng-tang*, or "Temple of the New-born," where nurses are provided at the expense of the State. These hospitals for forsaken children exist in all towns of any importance.

Many people in Europe are perfectly persuaded of the whole Chinese nation being so brutal and barbarous, that the crime

of infanticide is tolerated among them by Government and public opinion. This is not the case. The murder of infants is regarded as a crime in China, and the magistrates have never ceased to raise their voices against this horrible abuse of paternal authority. Of this the following Edict, placarded in Canton towards the end of 1848, may serve as one proof.

"EDICT AGAINST INFANTICIDE.

"The Criminal Judge of the province of Kouang-tong strictly forbids the abandonment of female infants, and orders that people shall cease this detestable custom, and fulfil the duties of life. I have learned that in Canton and its environs the abominable practice prevails of exposing female infants, in some cases because the family is poor, and cannot maintain a numerous offspring; in others because the parents desire a son, and fear that the care to be bestowed by the mother when a girl is born, may tend to retard another birth. Although there exist many establishments to receive foundlings of the feminine sex, this revolting practice still prevails — a practice which is an outrage to morals and civilisation, and which breaks the harmony of heaven.

"I therefore severely prohibit it, and urge the following considerations.

"Consider the insects, fish, birds, and wild beasts; all love their little ones. How then can you massacre those who are formed of your own blood, and who are to you as the hairs of your head?

"Do not make yourself uneasy on account of your poverty, for you can by the labour of your hands procure for yourselves some resource; and though it may be difficult for you to marry your daughters, that is no reason for abandoning them. The two powers of heaven and earth forbid it. Children of both sexes belong to the order of heaven; and if a girl is born to you, you ought to bring her up, even though she may not be worth as much as a boy. If you kill her, how can you hope to have sons? Will you not have to fear the consequences of your unworthy conduct, and especially the decrees of the justice of heaven? You stifle your paternal love, but you will repent of this when it is too late.

"I am a judge full of benevolence, goodness, and commiseration. You are all, if you have daughters, to bring them up with care; or if you are too poor for this, send them to the foundling hospitals, or give them to some friend who may bring them up for you. If you abandon them, you shall, as soon as you are

found out, be punished according to the laws, for you are unnatural parents; and for the crime of the murder of your children you are unworthy of any indulgence. Discontinue, then, this custom of devoting your children to death; cease to commit this bad action, and to draw on yourselves reproof and calamity.

"Let every one obey this special edict."

We might quote a great number of proclamations of the first Mandarins of the Empire, which speak in reprobation of the conduct of parents unnatural enough to put their girls to death, and which threaten them with all the rigours of the law.

These proclamations certainly themselves show how frequent infanticides must be in China, but at the same time they afford a proof that Government and public opinion do not favour such crimes. The Foundling Hospitals alluded to also testify to a certain amount of solicitude in the Chinese administration towards these unfortunate little creatures. We know very well, nevertheless, that these establishments afford a very poor resource, and can by no means remedy so extensive an evil; the Mandarins and officers of the hospital are far too busy in making as much money as they can out of it, to attend much to the treatment of the children.

A good government might certainly do much for the welfare of these establishments, which have existed in China for ages, and of which the pagan nations of the West never had even the idea. It is said that in Lacedemon, according to the laws of the sage Lycurgus, every child, at its birth, was examined with care, and if it appeared ill-formed, thrown into an abyss at the foot of Taygetus. The Romans, who fattened the fish in their ponds by throwing their slaves to them, had assuredly no very tender and compassionate feelings towards small children. Even the Chinese have not yet reached that point. Their Government at least protests constantly against every attempt on human life, and if it is powerless to oppose a sufficient barrier to this progressive evil, it is because, to withdraw men from vice and lead them to virtue, something more is required than worldly motives, and philosophical considerations. In every province of China the Government has expressed some interest in the fate of forsaken children; and if these works of beneficence, however excellent and praiseworthy in themselves, appear struck with sterility, it is because the religious idea, the vital spark of faith, is wanting to vivify them and render them fruitful.

The Society of Holy Infancy, founded at Paris only a few years ago, by the zeal and charity of M. de Forbin Janson, has already

perhaps saved in China a greater number of children than the immense revenues of all the hospitals of this vast Empire. It is beautiful, it is glorious for Catholic France, thus to watch with generous solicitude over the children of foreign nations, even of those who reject with disdain the benefits of her inexhaustible charity. Happy is the childhood of Catholic Europe, to whom religion has thus inspired in their earliest years the heroic sentiments of beneficence and self-sacrifice. Society may count upon a generation thus warmly interested in the salvation of infants abandoned at the other extremity of the world, and whose touching and marvellous works are making their influence felt in the most distant countries. Strange indeed is it, that this Society of Holy Infancy should be now struggling with more success against the practice of infanticide, than the Emperor of China, with all his treasures and his legions of Mandarins.

CHAP. XX.

Uncultivated Tracts in the Province of Kiang-si. — The Guard-house. — The Vinegar Polypus. — The Mandarin and his Steed. — Theft of Water-melons. — Arrival at Nan-tchang-fou. — Mode of installing oneself in the Palace of Literary Composition. — Solemn public Dinner. — Disappointment of the Spectators. — Visit of the Prefect of the Town. — A Mongol Mandarin. — His geographical Knowledge. — Labours of the Protestant Methodists in China. — Chinese Astronomers. — Aspect of the Capital of Kiang-si. — Manufacture of Porcelain. — Chinese Antiquaries. — Origin of the God of Porcelain. — Pisciculture in Kiang-si. — New travelling Arrangements.

From the lake Pou-yang to *Nan-tchang-fou*, the capital of the province of Kiang-si, the country that we travelled through for two days was a mere desert, in which were seen here and there a few wretched huts built of reeds, and some patches of ground half cultivated by poor peasants. Considered in relation to comfort and civilisation, nothing could well be more gloomy and desolate than its appearance; as far as our eyes could reach we saw nothing but vast prairies scantily covered with dry yellowish grass, that crumbled to dust beneath our feet; the dilapidated sheds, to which from habit the name of inn is given, offer no refreshment to travellers, but red rice boiled in water, and salt vegetables. We did not find even tea, and those who had forgotten to bring a little store with them had to drink hot water. This country, therefore, as may be supposed, was not precisely calculated for a journey of pleasure; and yet our two days' march across this wild and desert tract was a real

refreshment to us, a source of that vague sweet melancholy feeling that is often so soothing to the heart. It seemed to us as if we were once more wandering amidst the wild solitudes of Mongolia. The manners of those nomadic tribes, their tents, their flocks and herds; the long caravans of camels, the tall grass of the desert, the grunting ox of Thibet, the yellow sheep, the Buddhist monasteries with their numerous Lamas, all these recollections gradually grouped themselves together, and furnished to our imaginations most charming and varied pictures. We had been so long whirled about in the restless crowds of the civilised Chinese, that our minds had need of this calmness and repose. The tumult and agitation of so many great towns had at last almost thrown us into a fever, and for some days the peaceful silence of the desert was delightful.

Before arriving at Nan-tchang-fou, we stopped at a sort of guard-house to allow the hottest time of the day to pass, and we were very graciously received by a Mandarin with a white ball, who had about fifteen soldiers under his command. The refreshments that he offered us were indeed in that weather not very tempting, tea, rice-wine, roasted pistachio nuts, preserved ginger, and pickled chives; all these things did not seem likely to quench our intense and burning thirst; and we gazed mournfully at these Chinese dainties, without daring to touch them. The Weeping Willow, indeed, drank hot wine and boiling tea, munched the chives and the ginger, smoked one after another five or six pipes of tobacco, and found himself afterwards perfectly refreshed. Our tongues and throats really seemed to dry up more and more as we looked at him.

We inquired of the White Ball, whether it would not be possible to procure anywhere a little cold water? "Yes," replied he, "a few yards from here there is a very deep well, and the water is excellent, but as cold as ice; you must warm it a little before drinking it, otherwise it will certainly give you the colic." We begged him to send for some, promising to take every precaution against any illness it might occasion; and a good-natured soldier took a large pail, and ran to draw us some of this dangerous water. We then asked whether perhaps there was any vinegar in the establishment. "I have some," he said; "but I am afraid you will not like it; it is polypus vinegar, made by the animal itself." "Polypus vinegar; oh! we are acquainted with that; it is the best vinegar that can be got. But how does it happen that you possess such a treasure as a *tsou-no-dze* (vinegar polypus)? Were you ever on the coast of Leao-tong?" "Yes; some years ago I was sent on an expedition into that country, and I brought back a tsou-no-dze with me."

During this conversation the soldier arrived with the pail of ice-cold water; the White Ball gave us some of his wonderful vinegar, and with the help of a little brown sugar we compounded an exquisite beverage. The Chinese gazed at us with astonishment as we drank it. How it happened that these numerous and abundant libations, instead of occasioning colic, only cheered and refreshed us, they could not understand; and they could only get over the difficulty by declaring that the people of the West had a totally different organisation from that of the Central Nation.

This tsou-no-dze is a creature that, on account of its extraordinary property of making excellent vinegar, merits particular mention. It is a monstrous assemblage of fleshy and glutinous membranes, tubes, and shapeless appendages that give it a very ugly and repulsive appearance; you would take it for an inert dead mass; but when touched, it contracts and dilates and assumes various forms. It is an animal whose structure and character are not better known than that of the other polypi. This tsou-no-dze is found in the Yellow Sea, and the Chinese fish for it on the coasts of Leao-tong, but it is rather scarce. Possibly it may be more abundant in some other places, where it is neglected from ignorance of its peculiar property.

This polyp is placed in a large vessel filled with fresh water, to which a few glasses of spirits are added; and after twenty or thirty days this liquid is found transformed into excellent vinegar, without going through any other process, and without the addition of the smallest ingredient. The vinegar is as clear as spring water, very strong, and of a very agreeable taste. After the first transformation the source appears inexhaustible; for as it is drawn off by degrees for consumption, it is only necessary to add an equal quantity of pure water, without any more spirit, and the vinegar remains equally good.

The tsou-no-dze, like the other polypi, is easily propagated by germination; you detach a limb which vegetates and grows, and in a short time is found to possess the same property of changing water into vinegar. These details are not only based on the best information we have been able to collect, but we ourselves possessed one of these polypi, and kept it for a year, using constantly the delicious vinegar it distilled for us. At our departure for Thibet, we presented it to the Christians of our mission in the Valley of Black Waters.

After having abundantly quenched our thirst with the lemonade thus obtained, we bade adieu to the gracious White Ball of the guard-house. "Since you have honoured my poor dwelling," said

he, "I will ask the favour of accompanying you as far as the river which passes by Nan-tchang-fou." "We cannot permit such an expenditure of kindness on your part." "The Rites require it." "Ah! you are not a man of Kiang-si, since you are willing to extend the demands of the Rites instead of limiting them!"

"No! I am originally from the poor and humble province of Sse-tchouen."

"Sse-tchouen! We have traversed that province, and in our opinion it is the finest, richest province of the Empire. A man of Sse-tchouen cannot find himself very pleasantly situated in Kiang-si, especially in such a desert as this district."

"Kiang-si offers indeed few resources. Everything is dearer than in the other provinces, and in fact it is the practice of Government only to send here Mandarins whom it wishes to punish. Everyone knows that."

This little piece of confidence gave us the right to conclude that our dear White Ball himself had been in a manner put in the corner when he was sent to Kiang-si.

"We must hope," said we, "that you will not remain long here, and that the Emperor will give you in a better country a post more appropriate to your virtues and merits."

"I was not born under a happy influence. Success appears to fly from me; but perhaps your good words will bring me better fortune."

Whilst we were thus talking with mutual compliments, a soldier was saddling a lean horse that was kept tied to a stake a few yards from the guard-house, though such a precaution appeared quite unnecessary, as there was not much danger of his running away. As soon as he was saduled, they dragged him towards the Mandarin of the White Ball, who jumped upon his back pretty nimbly.

The poor animal staggered under the load, although the cavalier was not of excessive dimensions; and we could not make out how he was to accompany us, if he were mounted in that fashion.

"Come," he cried, "let us set off;" and at the same time he hit his courser a thump on the head with the handle of his whip. The animal shook his ears, sneezed, executed a few heavy gambols, and then returned to his former state of majestic immobility. "Come," cried the ardent cavalier again, "are you not going to get into your palanquins? Do let us set off." "Directly," said we; "do you try to go on before us, for it is easy to see that your quadruped will hardly be able to keep up with our bearers."

"Yes," said the White Ball, "that's it, I will go first;" and again he bestowed a vigorous cuff on the head of the steed, who

made two or three jumps forward, and then stumbled and fell on his knees as if to entreat his rider to leave him to his repose. The military Mandarin glided softly along his neck, and stretching out his arms, measured his length in the middle of the road. While the rider was employed in picking himself up again, the horse returned with the most perfect composure to his beloved stake, which he contemplated in the most affectionate manner. The Mandarin was not at all discouraged, but merely observed, "The stupid beast stumbled, we will try again;" and as he spoke he contrived once more to seat himself on his high-mettled racer, which two of the soldiers had dragged forward again, while a third was belabouring him behind with a broomstick. At last they succeeded in getting him into motion, and then we entered our palanquins and followed; but he remained all the way so far behind that no one would have dreamed that he was supposed to form part of our company.

There are very few horses in the south of China, as private people do not make use of them either for travelling or for rural labour. At certain distances on the principal roads you meet with relays, established for the service of Government; and these horses come from Tartary, and are in general of a pretty good breed, but they cannot well endure the heat of the southern countries; in a few years they lose their strength, and become at last completely unserviceable.

After two hours' march we arrived on the banks of a great river named *Tchang*. On the opposite bank was the town of Nan-tchang-fou, the capital of the province of Kiang-si. A large ferry-boat lay ready to carry us across, and our whole caravan entered it, with the exception of our supposed companion, the Mandarin of the White Ball, who was behind, nobody knew how far.

At the moment when the boat was about to start, two of our bearers begged the master to wait a moment, and leaped ashore again. They then immediately ran to a field of water-melons, stole as many as they could carry, and, jumping quickly on board again, were soon out of reach. The owner witnessed the theft from his house, that stood but a little way off, and ran after them, but to no purpose, as he was too late. Whilst he was vociferating and gesticulating on the shore, the marauders had divided the water-melons among them, and were refreshing themselves quite at their ease, without troubling themselves at all about the unfortunate proprietor, who cursed them with all the strength of his lungs.

When we had crossed the river Tchang, we found some public functionaries waiting for us on a broad quay that ran the whole length of the suburb. They entered into conference with the Weeping Willow, while we remained seated in our palanquins, and the crowd circulated about us, apparently without suspecting that they were exotic personages who had just landed in the capital of Kiang-si. The deliberations of our men of business were so immoderately prolonged, that at last we got out of our boxes, to go and inquire what they were talking about, and why they kept us so long waiting in the street. The Mandarins of the place had not yet, it appeared, made up their minds as to where we were to lodge, and they were consequently endeavouring to get some advice from the Willow, who certainly would not be able to relieve them from their perplexity. The passers-by immediately noticed the strangeness of our costume, and the magic yellow caps and red girdles did not fail to produce their effect. An immense crowd had soon collected round us. "See!" said we to the official personage of Nan-tchang-fou, "the lower classes of the people are already assembling from all corners upon the quay; is it proper that we should not yet know where we are to lodge?"

The Mandarins, already bewildered by the concourse of people, did not know what to do, but our servant Wei-chan came up and pointed out to us a large stately building. "That," he said, "was a Wen-tchang-koun, or Palace of Literary Composition." We had, it will be remembered, already lodged once during our journey at one of these establishments, and we had a very agreeable recollection of it. We did not deliberate much longer therefore, but resolved to go and instal ourselves there. To succeed in our attempt nothing more was required than a little steadiness, and we returned accordingly to our palanquins, and called out to the bearers in the most imperious tone we could command, "To the Wen-tchang-koun!"

"To the Wen-tchang-koun?" they repeated; "we obey;" and immediately they took up the palanquins; and Wei-chan, who perfectly understood these sudden evolutions, put himself at the head of the convoy, shouting to the crowd to make way with all due respect. The waves of the multitude divided as if by enchantment; the Weeping Willow, and the Mandarins of the town, who had not yet made up their minds, followed us by a kind of instinct; all the other members of the caravan did the same; and we entered thus the Palace of Literary Composition with that "haughty majesty" which is so much to the taste of the Chinese.

The guardians of the establishment, seeing a procession arrive, escorted by an immense crowd, of course supposed the new comers were persons of distinction. The folding doors were all thrown wide open to admit us, and after having traversed several halls and corridors, we stopped at the most remote, by the contrivance of Wei-chan, who conducted the enterprise with marvellous audacity. We then issued from our palanquins, and desired to see the chief guardian of the Wen-tchang-koun. "Open the superior apartments directly," said we, "and prepare the evening meal. We shall remain here some days. Let every one do his duty, and then all will be content."

We then addressed the functionaries of the town, who had come to receive us at the quay, but who had no idea what to do with us. "Do you," said we, "go to the Prefect of the city; tell him that we are in the enjoyment of good health, and that we have installed ourselves at the Wen-tchang-koun, in a manner conformable to our tastes." We concluded with a profound bow to the variously coloured balls, who departed looking extremely mystified, and as if they were made to play a part that they did not in the least understand. . . .

When every one else was gone, the Weeping Willow remained planted before us without saying a word, his little tearful eyes twinkling curiously, and seeming about to ask what we were going to do with him. "Master Lieou," said we, "you had to conduct us to the capital of Kiang-si; we are arrived at that capital, and your mission therefore is finished; where are you going to lodge?"

"Where am I going to lodge?" he repeated, with an air of open-mouthed astonishment. "How do I know?"

"You have certainly a better right to know than anybody else."

"That is possible, but nevertheless I do know nothing about it."

"Go and look for the head keeper of the establishment; he will put you somewhere. To-morrow we shall most likely have a visit from some of the authorities, and you can settle your affairs with them."

The Willow thought there was some sense in what we said, and went in search of the keeper accordingly, while we ascended the stairs to take a view of the lodging that we had thus appropriated.

Wei-chan, with the assistance of some of the servants of the house, had already put everything in order in the cool and spacious apartments which overlooked the town as well as the course of the river that we had just crossed, and the surrounding country.

An open gallery, provided with large porcelain seats, and vases of flowers, looked on the quay, where the crowd had assembled around us while the Willow and the Mandarins carried on their debate. We took a few turns backwards and forwards in this charming gallery; the sun had just set, and the delicious freshness of the evening was beginning to make itself felt. Some of the Chinese, who were still stationed on the quay, perceived us; the news flew round with the speed of lightning, and soon all heads were held as high in the air as possible, and all eyes were directed towards the gallery of the Wen-tchang-koun. Every one that passed stopped to contemplate us at leisure, and by degrees the crowd became so dense, that there was no possibility of passing at all. As we had so elevated a position, at so great a distance from the multitude, we could not be inconvenienced by their looks, eager as they were; and we therefore quietly continued our promenade, happy to be able to satisfy, without inconvenience, the very legitimate curiosity of the inhabitants of Nan-tchang-fou. We were only deprived of the advantage of hearing the conversation, in which there doubtless occurred many curious and interesting reflections.

The Maître d'Hôtel of the Wen-tchang-koun now came to inform us that the supper was ready, and to ask where we would please to have it served.

We looked at one another, the same thought occurring to both, and inquired whether there would be any inconvenience in our taking it on this gallery.

"None at all," he replied; "on the contrary, it will be lighter and cooler here, and besides, the *Hundred families** collected down there will be able to see you." As we asked nothing better than to be agreeable to the "hundred families," especially when they kept at a respectful distance, it was resolved that we should sup in the open air.

A brilliantly varnished table was brought and placed in the middle of the gallery; and, when the crowd observed the attendants placing on it numerous little dishes of dainties, by which Chinese repasts are usually commenced, a loud murmur arose all along the quay, and they evidently anticipated great amusement from seeing in what fashion the Western Devils consumed their food. They expected to see something extremely curious. Men from beyond the seas, and with such singular physiognomies, must certainly eat and drink in a manner quite unknown to the people

* "Hundred families" is a Chinese phrase, meaning the people.

of the Central Nation. Our prayer before the meal, and especially the two signs of the cross, drawn on a large scale, promised them from the commencement something interesting. Amidst these innumerable spectators there must have been some who understood the meaning of this sign, for there are Christians at Nan-tchang-fou, but the majority must have considered this a very odd way to begin supper. They expected, therefore, to get a glimpse into European manners.

Wei-chan brought us the rice-wine smoking hot in a pewter urn, and poured out some little porcelain cups of it, which we drank in the most scrupulous conformity to the Rites. We then began to pick some melon-seeds, exactly as if we had been born on the borders of the Yellow River, instead of the Garonne. The spectators, somewhat astonished, began to take less interest in our manœuvres — all this was familiar to them. We passed some time in drinking these little cups of rice-wine, and crunching the melon-seeds; not that we were in the habit of doing so, we generally directed our attention to what was more substantial; but this time, either from vanity, and the desire to display our knowledge of their customs, or out of mischief, to disappoint the curious gazers, we resolved to eat and drink in the most rigorously orthodox Chinese fashion.

The disenchantment of the worthy inhabitants of Nan-tchang-fou was complete when they saw us adjust our ivory chop-sticks between our fingers with perfect ease and gravity, and, seizing little morsels here and there, carry them dexterously to our mouths, and go through our exercise with these instruments as if we had done nothing else all our lives, — there was a movement among the crowd as much as to say, "We have been prettily taken in; those men are not nearly such barbarians as we thought; they might almost belong to the Flowery Kingdom."

As the exhibition thus by no means realised all that it had promised, the disappointed crowd after a time began to disperse, and soon there remained no one on the quay but some dealers in fruit and provisions, and a few idle people, who smoked their pipes, casting glances from time to time, with an observant eye, upon the two French missionaries, who, stimulated by excellent appetites, were dexterously disposing of the minute dainties served up to them.

As we were about to rise from table, we beheld a procession of Mandarins draw up before the gate of the palace. In a few minutes an officer of the establishment appeared upon the balcony, and presented us with a sheet of red paper, on which was inscribed

the name of the Prefect of the district. "Invite him to enter," we said; and the magistrate immediately presented himself, accompanied by the functionaries of his tribunal. After the usual salutations and compliments, the Prefect, whose face showed him to be of Mantchoo-Tartar descent, requested to know why we had established ourselves at the Wen-tchang-koun.

"Because, when we landed on this side of the river, our escort were unable to tell where we should go," was our reply; "we therefore chose the Wen-tchang-koun."

"These people were very stupid! Your lodging was prepared in the centre of the town."

"We are obliged for your attention, but we do not think the lodging in the interior of the town can be so agreeable as this. We Europeans like fresh air, and this balcony suits us admirably."

"No doubt the situation is most agreeable in the heat of summer: but this building is not quite at the disposal of the municipal authorities; it is the property of the Literary Corporation."

"We know it; and we also know that the Literary Corporation delights in the exercise of those social virtues which are inculcated in the sacred and classic writings. The *literati* and Bachelors of Arts in all civilised countries are scrupulously observant of the rites of hospitality toward strangers. If you should ever deign to visit the humble empire of France, the learned men of the country would not fail to lodge you in every Wen-tchang-koun on your route."

"Ah! I am unworthy! I am unworthy!" cried the Prefect, with a shower of quick little bows. "Nevertheless," he continued, resuming a vertical position, "I came to invite you to leave this palace, and repair to the lodging I have prepared in the interior of the town."

"Ah! we are unworthy so much attention!" replied we, executing in our turn a great many bows. "You see how comfortable we are; reason invites us to remain, and the Rites, which are founded on reason, enjoin you to leave us in peace."

"Well said! very well said!" cried the Mandarin, laughing. "I see that it will be difficult to persuade you to leave the Wen-tchang-koun."

"Very difficult — almost impossible; you had better not think of it any more; let us talk of something else."

The advice was taken, and the conversation turned to less embarrassing topics. We spoke of our travels, of China, of the

countries of the West, — in short, a little of everything. The Prefect was most agreeable, and said not another word about turning us out, which complaisance we rewarded by the polite attention of accompanying him to the gate of the "Palace of Literary Composition."

Our position was thus triumphantly established at Nan-tchang-fou, and all that remained for us to do was to arrange the rest of our journey to Canton. The next day and the following day we passed in the capital of Kiang-si, and we were visited by many Mandarins, and by the chiefs of the learned body whose palace we occupied. Every one was very obliging, nor did they find fault with our manner of installing ourselves in the Wen-tchang-koun. They contented themselves with laughing good-naturedly at the neatness and decision with which we had got out of our difficulties, and the cool manner in which we had established ourselves to our liking.

Among the numerous visitors we received at Nan-tchang-fou, there was one who interested us by his rough, almost savage behaviour, which was without a tinge of the supple, insincere courtesy that characterises the Chinese.

We were one day reclining on porcelain seats in our balcony, breathing the fresh air from the river, and watching the passers-by on the quay below, when a young Mandarin entered abruptly, without being announced, bade us good-day with a proud and independent bow, to which we were unaccustomed in China, and, pushing forward a bamboo seat with his foot, sat down opposite us. We were at first inclined to recall him forcibly to the observance of the Rites, and to soften a little the bluntness of his behaviour. But his countenance pleased us; it was lively, intelligent, full of candour and integrity, and we thought that his conduct might denote a haughty character, but not necessarily an impudent one.

"You treat us like old friends," we said; "between friends etiquette is superfluous."

"The Chinese are very ceremonious," replied he; "but I am not a Chinese, I am a Mongol."

"A Mongol! Ah! we ought to have guessed it. We ourselves have spent a good deal of time in the Land of Grass; we are acquainted with the Eight Banners, and have pitched our tent in all the pastures of Tartary, from the great Kouren, near the Kalkhas, to the Koukou-noor on the shores of the Blue Sea."

At the sound of these names, so poetical and sweet to the ears of a Tartar of the Steppes, the young Mongol rose in a transport

of delight, seizing our hands, and patting us on the shoulder, to testify his friendship.

"What!" he exclaimed, "you know the great Kouren and the Kou-kou-noor? You have encamped in the Land of Grass? No doubt you can speak the Mongol language."

"Yes, brother," we replied, "we understand the tongue of Tchinggis and Timour."

From that moment Chinese was set aside, and the conversation carried on in Mongol. This young man belonged to one of the noblest families of the tribe of Gechekten, with which we had resided for two years. Probably we had met him more than once during our journeys in the desert. He told us, that having gone to Pekin in the suite of his sovereign, when the tributary princes paid their annual visit to the Emperor at the commencement of the year, he had been seized with a desire to stay in the capital. His aim was to learn Chinese, study its literature, and, having passed the necessary examinations, to enter the magistracy.

After several years' study, he had obtained the degree of bachelor, and a few months before meeting us had been sent as supernumerary Mandarin to a tribunal of the capital of Kiang-si.

Perhaps our old predilection for the Mongols influenced us, but we thought there was something superior to the Chinese character in this child of the desert. The civilisation of Pekin, engrafted on this strong, vigorous disposition, appeared to have produced a new type, uniting and blending with advantage Chinese intelligence and penetration with the rough frankness and energy of the Mongol Tartars.

During the time we spent at Nan-tchang-fou we saw this young Mandarin several times, and his society was always welcome. His conversation recalled most agreeably the long time we had spent in the deserts of Tartary. He was also intelligent and well informed, and quite free from that affected disdain for foreign countries, and especially for the men and things of Europe, which the Chinese love to exhibit. On the contrary, he listened attentively, and with sincere admiration, to all that we told him of the nations of the West. He even went so far as to ask us whether in coming from France to China we had followed the route round Cape Horn, the Cape of Good Hope, or through the Red Sea. "Sea voyages must be very comfortable when you are used to them," said he, "but for my part, if I wanted to reach your country, I would rather travel with a caravan, in the Mongol fashion. I should start from Pekin, and cross the desert to Kiaktha, on the frontiers of Siberia. Thence I should traverse the kingdom of the Oros (Rus-

sians), and the various Western States, until I reached the grand Empire of France."

"And if you wished to visit the In-ki-li?" (English).

"Oh, I know that the country of the Red-haired people is surrounded by water on all sides. They are islanders. If I wished to visit them, I should sell my camels and hire a fire-junk" (steamboat).

We did not inform him of the improbability of finding purchasers for camels in Paris, lest it should lower that city in his estimation.

Of late years there is a remarkable tendency among the educated Chinese to the study of geography and of foreign nations, and this appears to us an immense step towards the development amongst them of the taste for European science. Since the war with the English, there have appeared several very complete Chinese geographies, containing very correct information concerning the various parts of the world, and especially the kingdoms of Europe. It is evident that a European hand has been engaged in their composition, and from the flattering strain with which the United States are mentioned in them, it is strongly to be suspected that an American has had something to do with these publications.

The Methodist ministers, who lie in ambush in all the five ports open to Europeans, having remarked that the prodigious quantity of Bibles furtively scattered along the shores of the Empire have not proved remarkably efficacious in working the conversion of the Chinese, have at last given up this harmless and useless system of Propagandism. They seem convinced now that bales even of well-bound and cautiously distributed Bibles will not make much impression on the Chinese nation, and they have lost some of their faith in the miraculous effect of this measure. However, their vocation being to print books and disperse them, they have composed certain little scientific works, by which they hope to captivate the minds of the Chinese.

In 1851, a few days before our departure from China, we chanced to get sight of one of these productions. It was simply a technical treatise on the Electric Telegraph.

Truly, a man must be profoundly ignorant of the Chinese nation to offer such a book for its instruction. The theory of the Electric Telegraph for men whose language does not even contain terms to express the simplest phenomena of electricity! It is scarcely credible. We feel assured, that throughout the Celestial nation there is not one man capable of understanding this work; for, in order to express new ideas, the author has had recourse to new

combinations of characters, forming a very original jargon, which the Chinese will not be in a hurry to construe. Doubtless everybody must wish for the moment when the Chinese shall abandon their ancient prejudices, and cultivate the modern sciences; but all instruction ought to proceed methodically, which Methodists at least should understand. Would there be a single Christian in China if the Catholic missionaries, instead of teaching the catechism to their neophytes, had begun by placing in their hands a treatise on grace, with dissertations on the Jansenist heresy?

This proceeding has been adopted partly in consequence of a false idea of the Chinese which has been conceived in Europe. Because they are said to know how to calculate eclipses, and so held in high favour some Jesuit astronomers who visited the court in the first reigns of the Mantchoo dynasty, it has been supposed that the nation was devoted to astronomic science, and consisted of three hundred millions of Aragos, more or less busied with stars and planets. And yet if there is on the earth a nation absorbed by the affairs of this world, and who trouble themselves little about what passes among the heavenly bodies, it is assuredly the Chinese. The most erudite among them just know of the existence of astronomy, or, as they call it, *tien-wen*—"celestial literature." But they are ignorant of the simplest principles of the science, and those who regard an eclipse as a natural phenomenon, instead of a dragon who is seeking to devour the sun and moon, are enlightened indeed. If foreign astronomers formerly exercised so much power at the court, and enjoyed such fame, is it not a proof that the native professors of the science were incompetent? Until the Jesuits came to their assistance, they were unable to draw up a good almanac, and, since their expulsion from Pekin, the members of the Tribunal of Mathematics have relapsed into their former ignorance, and every year Government is obliged to send the almanac to Canton, to be corrected by Europeans. The Chinese, we are convinced, would have great aptitude for all the sciences. From their quick penetration and incomparable patience, they would make rapid progress; but hitherto they have studied nothing for its own sake, they look only on the practical and productive side of things. Physiology, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, are considered only in their bearing upon sapecks. In their hands everything becomes a trade. If the books on astronomy and electricity, that the Methodists compose for them, furnished recipes for amassing a large fortune in a short time, they would soon conquer their repugnance to study them. They would listen very attentively to any one who should teach them how to augment their incomes, but

would laugh in derision at a proposal merely to increase their knowledge: they would consider such an offer merely as a bad joke.

We took advantage of our leisure time to view Nan-tchang-fou, which is one of the most celebrated of the provincial towns. We had already passed through it in 1840, but secretly, and in too great a hurry to have a very correct idea of it. Like other Chinese towns, it contains no public monuments worthy of attention. Pagodas, tribunals, and a few triumphal arches, erected in honour of widows and virgins, form its most striking architectural works. The streets are large and tolerably clean, the warehouses and shops magnificently adorned and laid out. On the whole, the town is the most regular and handsome, next to Tching-tou-fou, the capital of Sse-tchouen, that we saw throughout the Empire. Although Kiang-si is a poor province, incapable of self-support, the commerce of Nan-tchang-fou is considerable. This results from its position on the line of communication between the great centres of population and activity, such as Nan-kin, Canton, Han-keou, and Pekin. All goods from the north or the south must go by Nan-tchang-fou.

When we call Kiang-si a poor province, we refer to agricultural produce, for its manufactures have been among the most important in China for centuries past. This province contains all the largest porcelain factories, and Nan-tchang-fou is naturally the repository for the sale of their productions. It contains several immense shops, filled with china and porcelain of every kind, from those great urns covered with richly coloured reliefs, representing various scenes in Chinese life, to tiny cups, so frail and delicate, that they have been called egg-shell china.

The chief porcelain factory is at King-te-tching, east of Pou-yang, on the banks of the great river which falls into that lake. King-te-tching is not a regular town, not being surrounded by walls. Nevertheless, it contains more than a million of inhabitants, almost all employed in the manufacture of china. It is difficult to describe the bustle and activity that reigns throughout the town. All day long clouds of smoke and columns of flame ascending from its chimneys, and at night the whole place appears on fire — a stranger would imagine it was one immense conflagration. More than 500 separate factories, and thousands of furnaces, are constantly at work upon the china vases, which are sent in prodigious quantities into all the provinces of China, and thence all over the world.

In this, as in all Chinese manufactures, the division of labour is

carried to an infinitesimal extent. Each workman has his particular department; one paints a certain flower; another a bird; one lays on the red colour, another the blue. A china vase, when finished and ready for sale, has passed through the hands of more than fifty different workmen.

Father D'Entrecolles, who was entrusted with the mission to Kiang-si in the beginning of the 18th century, and had, therefore, often occasion to visit King-te-tching, where a number of the workmen have embraced Christianity, has furnished us with very curious and detailed accounts of the manufacture of china. By the assistance of these precious documents and numerous specimens of *kao-lin* and *pe-tun-ze**, our manufacturers succeeded at last in making a perfect copy of the Chinese and Japanese vases, which were so long the envy and despair of the European imitators.

The manufacture of china dates from a very ancient period in the Celestial Empire. It was already in a flourishing condition under the dynasty of Han, about the commencement of the Christian era; and Chinese antiquaries still possess beautiful specimens dating from that time. They are not as transparent as those made at present, but the enamel is finer, and the colouring more vivid. Amateurs preserve specimens of some kinds of which the Chinese have lost the secret of fabrication; such as the double cups, in which the outer part is perforated like lace, and the inner cup solid and of dazzling whiteness. Then there are some ornaments with magic figures, which are only visible when the vessel is full. These figures are drawn on the inside, and the colours have undergone a particular preparation, which renders them invisible when dry. There is also a kind of biscuit china, the entire surface of which is covered with lines crossing in all directions, as if the vase were composed of a thousand different pieces. It looks like the most delicate and exquisite of mosaics. The secret of the fabrication of this kind, however, as well as of many others, is now entirely unknown.

According to the Annals of China, the whole art has been completely lost several times in the course of those tremendous revolutions which have so often shaken that empire to its foundations. It had to be invented anew, and this was not always with as much success as before.

There is a class of Chinese amateurs who devote themselves exclusively to the collection of antique bronzes and porcelain, which they call *kou-toung*, or "old vase." They are esteemed as works of

* Essential materials for the manufacture of china.

art, but chiefly prized for the mysterious value attached to the things of past ages, though the Chinese workmen are cunning enough to imitate these kou-toung so as to deceive the most practised eye, and many antiquaries exhibit in their cabinets, with the most perfect good faith, pretended ancient porcelain, which is two or three months old at the utmost. The makers of the sham kou-toung generally use a kind of reddish earth. After the first baking of the vessels they are thrown into a kind of greasy broth, where they undergo a second cooking, and after this they are buried in a sewer, where they lie for forty or fifty days, and are then dug up again. In this manner is prepared most of the "fine old china of the dynasty of Youen."

The porcelain manufactory possesses a patron deity, whose origin is thus described by Father d'Entrecolles: — "As each profession has its particular idol, divinity being as easily conferred as the title of count or marquis amongst certain European nations, it is not surprising that there is a god of porcelain. He owes his existence to the following circumstance: — It is said that a long time ago a certain Emperor desired to have some china according to a particular design which he furnished. It was represented to him that it was impossible to execute his orders; but remonstrance served only to heighten his desire. As an emperor during his lifetime is the chief god of China, and sets no bounds to his will, the master manufacturers redoubled their efforts, and treated the unhappy workmen with the utmost severity, and these poor creatures lavished their money and their labour, getting only kicks and cuffs in return. At last, one of them, in despair, threw himself into the blazing furnace, and was immediately consumed, and the porcelain which was baking in this fire came out perfectly beautiful and quite to the Emperor's taste. Since then this unfortunate man, at first regarded as a hero, has become the tutelary idol who presides over porcelain factories. It is not stated, however, that this example has led any of his countrymen to aspire to similar honours." *

The province of Kiang-si possesses another trade, less important and valuable doubtless than the china manufacture, but worthy of remark on account of its peculiarity, and the profits of which are not to be despised. This province is very marshy, and abounds in ponds; there is scarcely a cottager who cannot boast of at least one close to his house, and these are turned to account for

* Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, vol. iii. p. 221.

the rearing of fish, which yield annually a considerable revenue to their cultivators.

During the last few years much attention has been turned in France to the art of pisciculture, as it has been called, and pains have been bestowed on the artificial production and rearing of fish. But, however new to Europeans, this art is very well known in China. In Kiang-si it is practised after the following fashion:—

In spring a number of men go round the provinces selling spawn. Their establishment consists of a wheelbarrow loaded with barrels containing a thick liquid more like mud than anything else. It is impossible to distinguish the smallest animalcule in it with the naked eye. For a few sapecks you may buy a bowlful of this mud, enough to sow a large pond; it is merely thrown into the water, and in a few days the young come forth. When they have attained some size they are fed with tender vegetables chopped up and thrown into the water, the quantity being augmented as they increase in size. The growth of these fish is incredibly rapid. In a month at most they are strong and active, and require abundant nourishment. Morning and evening the proprietors of fish-ponds ransack the fields for suitable plants, which they carry home in enormous quantities. The fish rise to the surface, and throw themselves eagerly on their food, which they devour speedily, keeping up all the time a kind of murmuring noise, like a number of rabbits. Their voracity can only be compared to that of silk-worms just before spinning their cocoon. After being fed thus for about a fortnight they generally attain a weight of two or three pounds, after which they grow no more. They are then taken out and sold alive in the towns.

The fish-ponds of Kiang-si contain only this one kind of fish, which is of an exquisite flavour; if there are any other sorts, at least we never saw them, and we are also unaware whether the spawn undergoes any preparation before it is sold.

We stayed five days at Nan-tchang-fou, during which time our chief occupation was to arrange the rest of our journey to Canton. The Governor of the province, the Prefect of the town, and the functionaries, civil and military, all showed us the greatest attention, and took pains to carry out the plans we had formed.

The extreme heat of the weather, and our own need of repose, decided us to continue our journey by water. From Nan-tchang-fou we could follow the course of a large river as far as the mountain Mei-ling, which is just half way, and can be crossed in a single day; after this, the river Kiang would take us all the rest

of the way to Canton. We knew that this route was infinitely preferable to the land journey, particularly if we were furnished with Government junks, and well-provisioned. Our efforts were crowned with perfect success; we were provided with a well-armed vessel of war for escort, and two superb junks, one for the Mandarins and their suite, and one for ourselves. We had expressly stipulated that we should be alone, that we might be at ease and free to attend to our exercises, and live as best pleased us; we took with us our own servant Wei-chan and a cook; a first-rate *artiste*, according to the Prefect of Nan-tchang-fou.

The commissariat department was arranged by the Governor on a truly sumptuous scale. In order that we might be treated perfectly according to our wishes, he issued a decree enjoining a contribution of five ounces of silver from every town we should pass, a sum amounting to about fifty francs. This was to be entirely devoted to the furnishing of our table; but as the towns stand close together along this river, we had a large sum of money over when we reached Canton. It will be seen further on to what use we put it.

It must be confessed, that the authorities of Nan-tchang-fou behaved very handsomely, and treated us with extraordinary pomp, and this dignified and liberal conduct contrasts strongly with the shabby treatment of the Russian colonel, who every ten years conducts an embassy from Kiaktha to Pekin. According to a law, which is faithfully executed, the representative of the Czar has a daily allowance of one sheep, a cup of wine, a pound of tea, a jar of milk, two ounces of butter, two fish, a pound of salted vegetables, four ounces of fermented beans, four ounces of vinegar, one ounce of salt, two saucers of lamp-oil, and once in nine days a Chinese dinner of four courses.

The escort, which had accompanied us from the capital of Hou-pé, took leave of us at Nan-tchang-fou. The Weeping Willow bade us a touching farewell, and we accepted his tearful good wishes with gratitude. As we were about to embark, we were accosted by two worthy citizens, with pleasant, open countenances, who wished us a good journey. We knew the moment we looked in their faces with whom we had to do.

"You are Christians," we said.

"Yes, father," they replied, looking all around to see that they were not observed. We hastily asked news of the mission, and of our fellow-labourers, and were then obliged to leave them, to enter our junk.

The mission of Kiang-si, entrusted to the brotherhood of St. Lazarus, counts now nearly ten thousand Christians, dispersed throughout the province; they are in general poor, and very timid. Every year a certain number of conversions take place, but the propagation of the faith goes on but slowly; as it does everywhere throughout the Celestial Empire.

CHAP. XXI.

Departure from Nan-tchang-fou. — A Mandarin Junk. — Comfort and Luxury of Water-Carriage. — Vehicles and Hotels. — Fiacre and Cabriolet Stands at Pekin. — Chinese light Literature. — Collections of Maxims and Proverbs. — Passage of the Mountain Mei-ling. — Nan-hioung, the frontier Town. — Chinese Rope Dancers. — Little Feet of the Women. — Origin of this Custom. — Navigation of the Tigris. — Recollections of our Entry into China in 1840. — View of the Port of Canton. — European Vessels. — First Night in Canton. — Our Martyrdom in Tartary. — Savings on the Road bestowed upon our Servant Wei-chan. — Stay at Macao. — Death of M. Gabet. — Departure for Pekin. — Arrival at Marseilles in 1852.

The junk on board which we embarked to ascend the river Tchang was a little floating palace. We had a drawing-room, dining-room, and bed-chamber of exquisite cleanliness and luxuriously furnished, and the paintings and gildings lavishly distributed around were heightened in effect by that beautiful Chinese polish which has not its equal in the world. In the forepart of the vessel were the sailors' quarters and the kitchen. and the men worked the junk and carried on their various occupations without ever coming to our end of the boat. On each side were large windows, curiously cut, and filled in with glass instead of paper; a piece of extraordinary magnificence in China. It would be impossible to enjoy a more convenient and elegant mode of river navigation than that with which the Prefect of Nan-tchang-fou had provided us. Accustomed, during our residence in China, to travel in merchant vessels and transports, we had not supposed the Chinese capable of fitting up a junk with so much comfort.

The river we were ascending was not very rapid, but when the wind was insufficient or unfavourable, recourse was had to the oars.

This was the case the first day. The captain, who no doubt had received minute instructions concerning the voyage, came to inquire whether we were satisfied with our accommodation, and whether the motion of his "ignoble junk" did not disturb our repose. "We are most comfortable; your delightful vessel is a Paradise;

but the motion is very great towards the stern, and the sailors make a great deal of noise in rowing."

"These inconveniences can be removed," said the captain; "I will go and see to it." He made us a low bow, and went away.

A few moments after, the noise of the oars ceased, and the junk appeared perfectly motionless; but on looking out of window, we perceived by the trees on the bank that we were passing rapidly along. We seemed moved by magic. The small boat had been launched, and by means of a rattan cable attached to the prow, we were being quietly towed against the current. This was indeed a polite attention; but we thought it right to tell the captain that it was unnecessary; being accustomed to the navigation of stormy seas, the gentle motion of a junk on a river was little likely to disturb us. "Whether the sailors row on board or in the boat makes no difference to the fatigue," was the captain's reply. "Besides, I only carry out the orders I received at Nan-tching-fou. It is customary to tow junks when they carry Mandarins of high rank."

Such journeys as this are real parties of pleasure. You enjoy the most profound and undisturbed tranquillity, and the landscapes which are gradually unfolded along the banks, offer the amusement of an inexhaustible variety. We forgot for some days the fatigue we had suffered for more than two years. The paternal goodness of Providence granted us this interval of calmness and repose, as a compensation for our sufferings in the frightful deserts of Tartary and Thibet, and we accepted these hours of recreation from the hand of God, with hearts full of gratitude, as we had received with resignation those of trial and tribulation.

We passed two weeks in our floating hermitage, without once going out of it; so pleasantly situated were we. When we came to any town liable to contribution, whether lying on the right or left bank of the river, we anchored, and our Mandarin conductors went to the tribunal to demand the prescribed sum. Generally the payment was made with tolerable exactness; but there were from time to time some little difficulties to conquer. The functionaries did not always show any remarkable eagerness to bring on board the number of sapecks fixed by the tariff. They sometimes sent us deputations to try and strike a bargain with us, and to allege a thousand and one reasons why they should be dispensed from furnishing the whole sum specified. We were very accommodating, and willing to receive absolutely nothing, provided only that they would make out a statement declaring the motives of the refusal, and signed by the authorities of the town. But no one would ever agree to this, and the matter always ended by their

sending the sapecks. When we became too much encumbered with this hard cash, Wei-chan used to get them changed into bank notes, payable to the bearer, and kept them himself under lock and key; we merely taking a memorandum of their amount.

It is not customary in China to travel at night, either by land or water, and every evening we got snugly into port. Our anchoring was performed with considerable ostentation. The war-frigate used to precede us, and choose a suitable place: our junk and that of our conductors were brought up alongside; and when everybody was ready and in full dress, a gun was fired, and the anchors dropped, of course to the accompaniment of the tam-tam, and the discharge of fireworks. In the evening we used to go from one vessel to another to pay visits to our travelling companions. The captain of the frigate was an old sailor, originally from Fo-kien; and we could not manage to keep up very long conversations with him, as he only spoke the dialect of his own province, mingled with a few Chinese expressions, more or less disfigured; so, after having exchanged many gestures and much pantomime with him, we went on board the junk of the civil Mandarin. He was a Pekin citizen of the purest breed, and had most refined and elegant manners, as became a native of the capital of the Flowery Kingdom. By his language, also, it was easy to see that he came from the metropolis; but, unluckily, he did not much care to talk, and the melancholy expression of his face made it evident that he was suffering from some keen sorrow. We respected his grief, therefore, and contented ourselves with making him very short and purely ceremonious visits.

In the morning, as soon as it was daylight, another gun was fired to announce the moment of our departure, and we began again our delightful trip. Railroads, steamboats, even stage-coaches, and all our rapid means of locomotion, are assuredly marvellous inventions, which every one admires, and which we never fail to appreciate when we are in a hurry to get from one place to another; but these hasty journeys are, it must be owned, seldom interesting. We may run over the whole world in this way without having much idea of the countries we have traversed, or the nations we have visited. In Europe, at the present day, travellers are forwarded exactly like bales of merchandise. Henceforward those who wish to make travelling a pleasure and a luxury, will be obliged to come to China, and get a Mandarin junk, in which they may glide gently from province to province, over the rivers and canals by which the Empire is traversed. The rich citizens of the Kingdom of Flowers find in all the great ports pretty boats, fitted up with all the com-

forts of Chinese civilisation, to be let on hire. These voyages, or rather long excursions, are made in the easiest style, the travellers stopping wherever convenience or the pleasure of the moment may suggest. As the most important towns are commonly situated on the banks of rivers, it is easy by this plan to study the country, and make yourself acquainted with the manners and customs of the inhabitants. In general the Chinese are not sedentary; and as, without crossing the frontiers of their own country, they can make themselves acquainted with almost all climates and productions of the earth, though their means of transport are slow and often inconvenient, they are always very ready to set off on a journey. In the southern provinces most of the travelling is done by water, but, with the exception of the aristocratic boats just mentioned, travellers find only dirty, crowded junks, where they are heaped one upon another, without seeming to think it at all unpleasant. They will remain shut up in them for months with incomprehensible patience, living on rice boiled in water, and passing their time in smoking and picking melon seeds. Those who are of an economical turn of mind, and wish to spare these luxuries, sleep almost the whole day, as well as the whole night. Nothing disturbs them,—neither heat, nor the smoke of tobacco or opium, nor the noisy conversations that are constantly going on all round them.

In the north the modes of locomotion are more fatiguing, but perhaps less tedious. People in easy circumstances travel in palanquins or in a kind of coach or waggon; others on horseback, on asses or mules, or they are drawn in a kind of wheelbarrow, or go on foot. The Chinese coaches are not on springs, and there are no seats in them, so that you must always sit cross-legged, like a tailor. As the roads also are terribly rough, you are constantly jolted up and down, and in imminent danger of a broken head. Prudent people take the precaution to have the sides of the vehicle cushioned, in order to soften a little the blows they are constantly receiving right and left. Upsets are of every-day occurrence, and this is perhaps one reason why the Chinese have acquired so much skill in the difficult art of setting fractured limbs; but it would certainly be a preferable plan to make better roads and carriages, so that the limbs might not want setting quite so often.

The most frequented roads of the north are provided with numerous inns, which must not always be judged of by their names. To look at the pompous signs by which they are decorated you would imagine you had met with the most virtuous men in the universe, and that the landlord amidst his guests was a very patriarch surrounded by a numerous family. The inscriptions in large

letters on the gate, promise you peace, concord, disinterestedness, generosity, all kinds of virtues, in addition to abundance of good cheer, and the accomplishment of all your wishes. But you have hardly crossed the threshold, before you discover that you have got into a den of thieves, where you will be likely to be both pillaged and starved. Experienced travellers know perfectly well what they have to trust to with respect to the inexhaustible abundance promised by the signs, and take care to have with them an assortment of provisions. It is customary for every one to carry a little bag of tea, suspended to his girdle; and those who are not inclined to content themselves with a kind of bun made of wheat and rice boiled in water, are also accompanied by an oblong trunk, divided into various compartments filled with potted meat, salt fish, and sour krout. The Chinese call these provisions for travelling *kan-leang;* that is to say, "dry and cold."

In the considerable towns you do find sometimes tolerably well-kept inns, with private rooms for those who desire them; and such as Europeans, whose habits are not too luxurious, might occupy with pleasure, though of course they are not so elegant as those of our best hotels. You can, however, take your meals at the *table d'hôte*, or have the dishes you desire served to you separately, as in ours, and you are mostly well and promptly attended.

As it is customary to commence by drinking tea, and amusing yourself with little trifling dainties, the cooks (or, to give them a more stately and appropriate appellation, the "Mandarins of the Kettle") have time for their culinary operations. They bring the dishes ordered, in the most ostentatious manner, and when the waiters of the establishment put down the dishes before the guests, they sing out their names in a loud voice, so as to be heard by every one. This plan, as may be supposed, is found very useful in exciting the vanity of the guests, and inducing them to ask for expensive things, that perhaps they would willingly have done without if they had been dining in private. When the repast is finished, the head waiter of the hotel comes to the door, and commences a kind of song, of which the subject is the nomenclature of the dishes, and the burden, the sum total of the expenses. When the guests go out—and this, it must be owned, is a critical and solemn moment — those who have dined economically depart with an humble and contrite air, and try to avoid the notice of the company; while the Chinese lords, who have eaten sumptuously, and of high-priced viands, march out with their pipes in their mouths, their noses in the air, and casting proud and disdainful glances on all around. If the fashion were adopted in the taverns

of Europe, of proclaiming aloud what everybody had taken, it is to be feared that many a guest would give himself an indigestion out of pure vanity.

The Chinese, when travelling, are habitually abstinent, and in some of the provinces they have a practice to which we found it very difficult to accustom ourselves. Before setting out in the morning, they swallow a large cup of warm water, in which they have previously dissolved a few grains of salt. They are gifted with astonishing powers of appetite and digestion, which seem to be entirely under their control. They support hunger and thirst with the greatest facility, and yet, when the opportunity presents itself, they can swallow vast quantities of rice without suffering the slightest inconvenience. Their stomachs seem thus to be of almost unfathomable depth. We have travelled in districts of the north where there was really scarcely anything to be bought, and the Chinese, who did not like the trouble of carrying provisions, used to take at one meal all the food they required for twenty-four hours. In the morning, as soon as ever they were up, they breakfasted, dined, and supped all at once.

Many important cities of the south are built in the water, like Venice, and the magnificent canals, that serve for streets, are furrowed by innumerable little boats. Pekin offers a very remarkable peculiarity — namely, in some of the populous quarters, you find coach stands, where small vehicles, drawn by one or two mules, can be taken on hire by the hour or by the drive, exactly like hackney coaches and cabriolets in Paris and London. This custom is very ancient in the Celestial Empire, and does not at all seem to have been borrowed from Europe. Probably it existed when our good forefathers were running wild in the woods.

But although the Chinese have been in possession of coaches longer than we have, their coaches are still greatly inferior to ours. Those of Pekin are scarcely any better than the detestable travelling waggons of which we have already spoken. They are smaller, more elegantly painted and varnished, and fitted up inside with red or green silk; but they are never on springs, and this inconvenience is felt even more in the capital than in the country.

The principal streets, which were formerly paved with large flag-stones, not having undergone any repair for, perhaps, two hundred years, have lost almost as many stones as they have retained; so that you come continually to great square holes, and, as may be supposed, this is not very convenient for carriages; and they often proceed by a series of jumps from one side to the other.

Their wheels are, indeed, of enormous solidity, and they very seldom break; but that does not prevent the vehicle from upsetting. During our stay at Pekin, we were induced once to take a drive in one of these abominable machines, and we were so atrociously maltreated in the course of it, that we resolved never again to have recourse to that method of locomotion. The Chinese accommodate themselves to it wonderfully, and sit tranquilly smoking their pipes, and seeming, by the elasticity that is so remarkable in them, to defy the roughest jolts and the most unexpected bumps. We never heard that any one of them had fractured his skull. The drivers of these coaches have no other seat than the pole, but they manage to preserve their equilibrium.

In general it may be said that all methods of locomotion in China are either fatiguing, or dangerous, or tedious, and these coaches unite all these advantages in one. The Mandarin junks are, unquestionably, the best and the most comfortable. Since leaving Nan-tchang-fou to ascend the river Tchang, our days had flowed on with indescribable calmness and rapidity, and we profited by this period of peace and tranquillity to collect our notes, and revive the recollections which have enabled us to compose this narrative. This glance cast back upon our past tribulations was a source of pleasant emotion. One can only enjoy the sweets of repose after long fatigue. When the sailor has got into port, he likes to look back on the furious tempests of the ocean, and the ecstasies of felicity are reserved by Providence for hearts bruised and worn by suffering.

The sweet quiet interval of this peaceful voyage procured for us also a better acquaintance with the light literature of China. Our servant, Wei-chan, was a great reader, and whenever he went ashore he used to come back with a stock of little pamphlets that he afterwards devoured in his own cabin. These ephemeral productions of the ready pens of the literary class usually consist of tales, novels, poems, biographies of illustrious men or of notorious villains, and fantastic and marvellous stories of various kinds. The Greeks fixed the abode of their monsters and ephemeral creatures in the East, and the Chinese have returned the compliment by placing theirs in the West, beyond the great seas. There dwell their Dog-men, their nation with ears long enough to trail on the ground as they walk; there is the kingdom of Women, and of the people with a hole right through them at the breast; the Mandarins of which people, when they go out, merely pass a stick through this hole, and have themselves carried thus between two

domestics. If the bearers are strong enough, they often string on several gentlemen at once.

These tales are a good deal in the style of Gulliver's Adventures, and some of them are full of the most disgusting obscenity; for the Chinese are fond of indulging their imaginations with this kind of reading, which, indeed, can teach them little that they did not know before.

We found in the collection of Wei chan some very curious productions, that we read with the most lively interest. These were collections of proverbs, maxims, and popular sentences, from which we made some extracts that we will give here, as we believe the reader will peruse them with pleasure, as specimens of Chinese character and modes of thought. There are some indeed that have subtlety and salt enough not to be disdained by La Rochefoucauld.

"The sage does good as he breathes — it is his life."

"One may be decorous without being chaste; but one cannot be chaste without being decorous."

"My books speak to my mind, my friends to my heart; all the rest to my ears."

"The wise man does not speak of all he does, but he does nothing that cannot be spoken of."

"Attention to small things is the economy of virtue."

"Raillery is the lightning of calumny."

"Man may bend to virtue, but virtue cannot bend to man."

"Repentance is the spring of virtue."

"Virtue does not give talents, but it supplies their place. Talents neither give virtue nor supply the place of it."

"He who finds pleasure in vice, and pain in virtue, is a novice both in the one and the other."

"One may do without mankind, but one has need of a friend."

"Ceremony is the smoke of friendship."

"If the heart does not go with the head, the best thoughts give only light; this is why science is so little persuasive and probity so eloquent."

"The pleasure of doing good is the only one that never wears out."

"To cultivate virtue is the science of men; to renounce science is the virtue of women."

"You must listen to your wife, and not believe her."

"If one is not deaf or stupid, what a position is that of a father-in-law! If with a wife and a daughter-in-law, one has also sisters and sisters-in-law, daughters and nieces, one ought to be a tiger to be able to hold out."

"The happiest mother of daughters is she who has only sons."

"The minds of women are of quicksilver, and their hearts of wax."

"The most curious women willingly cast down their eyes to be looked at."

"The tongues of women increase by all that they take from their feet."

"The finest roads do not go far."

"When men are together, they listen to one another; but women and girls look at one another."

"The most timid girl has courage enough to talk scandal."

"The tree overthrown by the wind had more branches than roots."

"The dog in the kennel barks at his fleas, but the dog who is hunting does not feel them."

"He who lets things be given to him, is not good at taking."

"At court people sing that they may drink; in a village people drink that they may sing."

"Great souls have wills, others only feeble wishes."

"The prison is shut night and day, yet it is always full; the temples are always open, and yet you find no one in them."

"All errors have only a time; after a hundred millions of objections, subtleties, sophisms, and lies, the smallest truth remains precisely what it was before."

"Who is the man most insupportable to us? He whom we have offended, and whom we can reproach with nothing."

"Receive your thoughts as guests, and treat your desires like children."

"Whoever makes a great fuss about doing good, does very little: he who wishes to be seen and noticed when he is doing good, will do it long; he who mingles humour and caprice with it will do it badly. He who only thinks of avoiding faults and reproaches, will never acquire virtues."

"For him who does everything in its proper time, one day is worth three."

"The less indulgence one has for oneself, the more one may have for others."

"Towers are measured by their shadow, and great men by those who are envious of them."

"We must do quickly what there is no hurry for, to be able to do slowly what demands haste."

"He who wishes to secure the good of others, has already secured his own."

"The court is like the sea; everything depends upon the wind."

"What a pleasure it is to give! There would be no rich people if they were capable of feeling this."

"The rich find relations in the most remote foreign countries; the poor not even in the bosom of their own families."

"The way to glory is through the palace; to fortune through the market; to virtue through the desert."

"The truths that we least wish to hear are those which it is most to our advantage to know."

"One forgives everything to him who forgives himself nothing."

"It is the rich who want most things."

"Who is the greatest liar? He who speaks most of himself."

"A fool never admires himself so much as when he has committed some folly."

"When a song gives much fame, virtue gives very little."

"One never needs one's wit so much as when one has to do with a fool."

"All is lost when the people fears death less than poverty."

After a delightful voyage of fifteen days, we arrived at the foot of the mountain Mei-ling, when we bade adieu to our Mandarin junk, and returned to our palanquin. At sunrise we began to climb the steep and rugged sides of Mei-ling. There are several paths, but as they all present nearly the same difficulties, you do not give yourself much trouble about the choice.

The multiplicity of paths is occasioned by the great numbers of travellers and porters who are obliged to cross the mountain, which is in fact the sole passage for all the merchandise that the commerce of Canton is continually pouring into the interior provinces of the Empire. It is impossible to see without pain all these unfortunate creatures loaded with enormous burdens, dragging themselves slowly up these tortuous and almost perpendicular paths. The men whom their poverty condemns thus to this terribly hard labour, live, it is said, a very short time. We remarked, nevertheless, among the long files of porters, some old men, bending painfully under their load, and scarcely able to support their tottering steps.

At certain distances you find bamboo sheds, where travellers go to refresh themselves a little in the shade, to drink some cups of tea, and smoke a pipe of tobacco, to restore their sinking spirits.

We arrived towards noon at the summit of the mountain, where there is a sort of triumphal arch, in the form of an immense portal; on one side of which ends the province of Kiang-si, and on

the other begins that of Canton. We could not cross this frontier without emotion, for we had now at last set foot in the province which is in direct communication with Europe. It seemed as if we were only a short way from Canton, and Canton represented to us Europe — France, that country so dear to our recollections. We descended the mountain slowly and cautiously, on account of the masses of rock with which the way was thickly strewn, and we arrived in the evening at *Nan-hioung*. This town is celebrated for its storehouses and its vast port, where all the junks stop that come up the river from Canton. We went to lodge on the quay, in a spacious and magnificent communal palace; and as the last fifteen days had been so agreeable, we hastened to express to the Prefect of the town our wish to complete the journey down the river to Canton as before in a Mandarin junk.

The next day all was strictly regulated in conformity with our request; but it was settled that we should pass the day at Nan-hioung, in order to give the captains of the junks time to make their preparations.

As soon as we rose from table we were invited to go and smoke and take tea in a spacious court under the umbrageous shelter of an avenue of great trees. It happened that there was then at Nan-hioung a celebrated troop of rope-dancers, and the Prefect of the town had thought proper to indulge us with a representation. When we entered the court in company with the Mandarins we were received with some music, which was certainly loud enough, but of rather equivocal pretensions in other respects. The ropes were already stretched, and the artists speedily commenced their evolutions. The Chinese are very skilful rope-dancers, as might naturally be supposed from their great elasticity and suppleness of limb; but the most distinguished of the troop were two women, who, notwithstanding the incredible smallness of their little goat's feet, performed prodigies of agility.

We have already said that, though the women are forbidden to play any dramatic part, they are allowed to dance on the rope and figure in the exercises of equitation. They show themselves in general indeed more skilful than the men in these performances, and in the north of China there are ambulatory horse-riding companies in which the women excel in the management of the horses and the most difficult feats of the circus. One can hardly imagine how they can stand on one leg, pirouette, pass through hoops, and cut all kinds of capers, while the horse is galloping and bounding in the circle. The fashion of little feet is general in China, and dates, it is said, from the highest antiquity. Europeans sometimes ima-

gine that the Chinese in the excess of their jealousy have invented this custom in order to keep their women in doors, and prevent their gadding abroad. But though this jealousy may perhaps find its account in this strange and barbarous mutilation, there is no reason to attribute to it the invention. It has been introduced gradually without any deliberately formed purpose, like other fashions. It is said that in some remote antiquity, a certain princess excited universal admiration for the delicate smallness of her feet; and as she was besides gifted with remarkable attractions she naturally gave the tone to Chinese fashion, and the ladies of the capital adopted her as the type of elegance and good taste. The admiration for small feet made rapid progress; it was admitted that, at last, a criterion of beauty had been discovered; and as people have always a passion for new follies, the Chinese ladies sought by all possible methods to follow the fashion. Those who were already of mature age, however, resorted in vain to bandages and various means of compression; they found it impossible to suppress the legitimate developments of nature, and to give to their basis the elegance they so much desired. Young ladies had the consolation of obtaining some success, but not to the extent they wished. It was reserved for the succeeding generation to witness the complete triumph of little feet. Mothers devoted to the new mode did not fail, when a daughter was born to them, to compress the feet of the poor little creature with tight bandages that hindered their growth; and the results of these measures having appeared highly satisfactory, they were generally adopted throughout the Empire.

Chinese women, rich and poor, in town and country, are all lame; at the extremity of their legs they have only shapeless stumps, always enveloped in bandages, and from which all the life has been squeezed out. Upon these stumps, they draw pretty, little, richly embroidered boots, and support themselves upon them by constantly keeping themselves exactly balanced. Their step is a kind of hop, and resembles that of the Basque people when mounted on stilts. As they are practised in it from their infancy, however, the Chinese women do not find as much difficulty as might be supposed; not more than many lame people among us, who can often run pretty quickly. When you meet these women in the streets, you would think, from their little tottering steps, that they were just ready to fall; but there is often some affectation in that, as they consider this kind of step graceful. In general they are so much at their ease, that when they think they are not seen they run and jump and frolic about quite prettily. The favourite game of young Chinese girls is battledore and shuttlecock; but

instead of a battledore they make use of one of their little boots, to send the shuttlecock backwards and forwards; and as they sometimes pass whole days in this sport, one may venture to conclude that they do not suffer much pain or fatigue from the stumps that serve them for feet.

All the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire are mad upon this point of the little feet of women, and young girls who have not been properly tortured with bandages in their infancy find it no easy matter to get married. The mothers, therefore, are of course extremely solicitous upon this point. The Mantchoo-Tartar women have preserved the use of feet as large as nature made them; but the manners of the country have, nevertheless, influenced them so far that they have invented shoes with very high soles, terminating in a point, upon which they can totter even more lamely than their Chinese sisters.

This fashion of little feet is unquestionably most barbarous, absurd, and injurious to the development of the physical strength; but what means are there of putting a stop to the deplorable practice? It is decreed by Fashion, and who would dare resist her dictates? The Europeans, besides, have no right to be so very severe upon the Chinese; for they also set a considerable value upon small feet, and many of them subject themselves to pain every day by wearing shoes that are not really large enough for them. What would the Chinese women say, too, if any one should tell them that beauty does not consist in having imperceptible feet, but it does in having an intangible waist, and that, though it is not desirable to have the feet of a goat, it is to have the shape of a wasp?

Who knows but that the Chinese and European ladies would end by making mutual concessions, and adopting both fashions at once? Under pretext of increasing their beauty, they would not fear to disfigure completely the works of their Creator.

The performance of the rope-dancers lasted all the evening, and their manœuvres were very amusing; but we could only give them a divided attention, for the thought that in a few days we should be at Macao occupied us incessantly, and occasioned us too lively emotion to permit of our bestowing due admiration on their skill.

The next morning we embarked on board the junks, which were built and decorated precisely like those that had carried us as far as the mountain of Mei-ling. What now remained to us of our long and toilsome journey was nothing more than an agreeable excursion. We had nothing to do but to allow ourselves to

float quietly on to Canton. As soon as the anchor was raised, and that our junk began to move rapidly on her way, the recollections of having ascended this river in 1840, on our first entrance into the Empire, came thronging back into our minds, and filling them with sweet melancholy. This is what we wrote at that time to some kind friends in France, on giving them an account of our departure from Canton, and our first introduction into China. Our letter was dated from a mission situated at a short distance from the Mei-ling mountain: —

"Towards six o'clock they made my toilette, *à la Chinoise*. They shaved my head, with the exception of the spot at the top, on which I have now been letting the hair grow these two years past; they then put me on a false head of hair, which they arranged in plaits, and I found myself in possession of a magnificent tail, that descended nearly to my knees. My complexion, not too fair before, as you know, was artificially improved by the addition of a yellowish tinge all over it; my eyebrows were cut off, in the fashion of the country; the long and thick moustaches, that I had been cultivating for some time, disguised the European cut of my nose, and, finally, Chinese robes completed my metamorphosis.

"As soon as it was dark, we took our way to the junk, that, proceeding up the river from Canton, was to conduct us to Nan-hioung on the confines of the province of Kiang-si. A great Chinese fellow, mounted on a long system of legs, opened the march; the courier followed him. I followed the courier, and a Chinese seminarist, bound for the mission of Kiang-si, followed me; so that we formed a kind of thread to guide ourselves through the great labyrinth called Canton."

This city, as I said, produced on me the impression of one great ambuscade. Its streets are narrow, tortuous, and winding like a corkscrew. You might suppose it was not true for the people of Canton, that the shortest line between any two given points was a straight one.

Now, if to these capricious-looking streets, with the fronts of the houses all whimsically carved, you throw in a profusion of little lanterns, big lanterns, lanterns of all shapes and sizes, ornamented with Chinese characters of all colours, you will have an idea of Canton seen hastily by lamplight.

"Amidst all the immense population by which the streets were thronged, our grand business was not to lose sight of each other, or break the chain that our party formed. But, alas! presently we found it was broken. At the corner of a dark street, the

courier who formed the next link to me lost sight of the Chinese who preceded him, and who alone knew the way. Once out of sight, in which direction were we to look for him? The street we were in was no thoroughfare, and we did not know which of the turnings he had taken. Our perplexity was great, so we cried aloud for our guide in all directions, and fortunately at last he made his appearance. Having noticed that no one was following him, he had retraced his steps, and picked us up again just where he had dropped us. We then resumed our march gaily, and soon found ourselves, with thankful hearts, on board our junk. The crew had not yet finished their preparations, and we could not go on till the next day, so that we passed the night in the river, opposite the town, and, so to speak, under the very beard of the Viceroy.*

"The river of Canton during the night presented really the most fantastic spectacle I had ever witnessed. It seemed to be almost more populous than the town. The water is covered by a prodigious quantity of vessels of all dimensions and of indescribable forms. The greater part are shaped like fish; and among these the Chinese have chosen for models those of the most extraordinary figure. Some of the vessels are built like houses, and these have rather an equivocal reputation; but all are richly decorated; many resplendent with gilding, and elegantly carved into transparent lace-work, like the wood carvings of some of our ancient cathedrals. All these floating habitations, hung round with pretty lanterns, are cruising about incessantly, without ever becoming entangled one with the other. The skill of their occupants in this respect is really admirable; you see they are an aquatic population: born, living, and dying on the water.

"Every one seems to find on the river whatever is necessary for his subsistence. During the night I was amusing myself a long while in watching the passing and repassing before our junk of a crowd of small craft, that were nothing else than provision-shops; bazaars in miniature. They were selling in them soup, fried fish, rice, cakes, fruit, &c.; and to complete the effect of the picture, you must add the incessant beating of tam-tams, and letting off of fireworks.

"The next day, Wednesday, we set off early in the morning, with hearts full of hope. Our little bark suited us delightfully; the crew was not numerous, consisting only of three young men, who were the sailors, and their aged mother, who sat at the helm

* This viceroy was Ki-chan, and we did not then imagine we should one day become acquainted with him in the capital of Thibet.

and filled the office of pilot. They appeared simple-hearted fellows, and we rejoiced at this, as we thought they would not be sharp enough to find us out.

"The Tigris, as this part of the river is called by Europeans, did not display any remarkable scenery on its banks. It goes on winding through a long chain of mountains, and when its rather shallow bed is not enclosed between high-pointed rocks, it shows on both banks more or less extensive plains of fine whitish sand; some fields of rice and wheat, and rich plantations of bamboo and weeping willow; many high hills, for the most part sterile and bare; some lightly covered by a layer of reddish soil, and some scattered groups of pines, and withered grass on which buffaloes were carelessly feeding. These are the things that meet the eye as you proceed up the river.

"In several places we saw enormous masses of calcareous stone, that look as if they had been cut by the hand of man from the summit to the base, in order to open a passage for the river. I asked the Chinese whether they could account for this, and the question did not puzzle them the least in the world. They said, 'Oh, yes; the Emperor Yao, aided by his Prime Minister, Chan, divided this mountain, to facilitate the flowing off of the waters after the great inundation.' This great inundation, according to the Chinese chronology, corresponds to the time of Noah's deluge.

"One of the shores rose perpendicularly in a colossal wall of a single block, and was enriched besides by a phenomenon, which I was a long time without comprehending. I could see at a great height on the rock two kinds of galleries cut in it, upon which were moving something like human figures amidst innumerable lights. From time to time some flaming matter fell from these galleries and was extinguished in the river. As our junk approached the spot, we saw moored at the base of the rock a crowd of little skiffs, filled with passengers. It was a celebrated place of idolatrous pilgrimage. Those who came to practise their superstitious rites there passed from their boats into a subterranean passage, and then ascended by a staircase cut in the rock to the upper galleries. There are found here certain idols that attract pilgrims from a great distance."*

In passing up the river again, after an interval of six years, we took pleasure in recalling our former impressions, and in contemplating the points that had struck us forcibly at the period of our entrance into China. We saw again with emotion the mountains

* Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, No. 88. p. 212., &c.

that form a sort of natural dike to the waters of the Tigris; that pagoda dug in the living rock; those custom-house officers ranged along the shore, who in our former passage had given us so many frights. By degrees, as we advanced, the bed of the river enlarged itself, and the Canton junks became more numerous. The sound of the oars and the shrill nasal song of the sailors filled the air with a wild and melancholy harmony, that we listened to with a mingled feeling of joy and sadness. It seemed to us as if we were about to enter the Celestial Empire for the first time, and had just bade adieu for ever to the European colonies of Canton and Macao. But, instead of that, we were now about to see them once more!

On the sixth day after our departure from Nan-hioung, the Tigris had ceased to roll its blue waters through mountains; and we entered on a richly cultivated plain, where from time to time we inhaled a powerful and invigorating breeze, that seemed to expand our chests. It was a breeze from the sea, and Canton was not far off! Standing motionless on the deck of the junk, straining our eyes in that direction, we felt all the tremor that precedes the strong emotions of a return after long absence. The last rays of the sun were just fading on the horizon, when we perceived something like an immense forest, stripped of its leaves and branches, and retaining only the trunks of the great trees. The current, the breeze, and the tide, were now sweeping us on rapidly to the roads of Canton; and soon, among the innumerable masts of Chinese junks, we distinguished some more elevated than the rest, and the peculiar structure of whose yards made us give a sudden start, and filled our eyes with tears. Among the native vessels of China arose the grand and imposing forms of a steam-ship and several East Indiamen; and amidst the flags of all colours that were waving in the air, we perceived those of the United States, of Portugal, and of England. That of France was not among them; but when one has been long at the other side of the world, on an inhospitable soil, in China, in short, it seems that all the people of the West form one great family. The mere sight of a European flag makes the heart beat, for it awakens all the recollections of our country.

In traversing the port of Canton on our Mandarin junk, our eyes sought with eager curiosity for all that was not Chinese. We passed alongside of an English brig, and we could not gaze enough at the sailors in their glazed hats, who, ranged in a line along the deck, were watching us passing; assuredly without suspecting that they had under their eyes two Frenchmen just returned from the high table-land of Asia. Probably they were amusing themselves

at our Chinese costume, while we were going into ecstasies at their astonishing physiognomies. Those rubicund visages, those blue eyes, those long noses and fair hair, those curious narrow clothes, pasted, as it seemed, upon their limbs — how droll it all was! A pretty trim little vessel, painted green and covered with a white awning, now passed us; and in it were seated three European gentlemen, smoking cigars, enjoying apparently a pleasure trip. How grotesque in the eyes of an Asiatic would their costume have appeared! They wore black hats and white trousers, waistcoats, and jackets. A Thibet man would have burst out laughing to see those faces, naked of beard or moustache, but having instead a bunch of red curly hair on each cheek. We understood now how absurd Europeans must look in countries which have no knowledge of their customs and fashions.

After making many intricate turns through this vast port, we landed at last at a little wharf, where a Mandarin was waiting for us. They put us into palanquins, and we were transported at a rapid pace to the centre of the town, and to the house of a civil functionary of inferior rank.

At length, then, we had reached Canton! This was in the month of October, 1846, six months after our departure from Lha-ssa.

When we quitted the capital of Thibet, it seemed to us as if we should never reach the end of the journey we were undertaking. It appeared to be full of so many difficulties and hardships, that in all human probability we should perish of fatigue and privation on the way; but Providence had been our guide, and led us in perfect safety through all the dangers by which we had been surrounded. As soon as we had entered the apartments assigned to us, we fell on our knees, and returned thanks to God for all the mercies He had showered upon us during these laborious journeys — journeys that were truly undertaken in the hope of glorifying His name and extending His kingdom upon earth.

A short time after our arrival at Macao, we received a visit from a long Chinese, who presented himself in the quality of official interpreter to the administration. After he had made an imposing display of his whole stock of knowledge of English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, we told him that if he would be so kind as to speak Chinese, we should probably get on a great deal better; but to this he would not agree. Under the pretext that he was an interpreter, the wretched man persisted in his unintelligible jargon. We asked him whether M. van Bazel, the Dutch Consul, was then at Canton, and as he replied, "Yes! yes! Signor!" we begged him to get a letter carried for us to that gentleman immediately.

We had known M. van Bazel a long time, and we knew how much sympathy and devotion he had always shown to the Catholic missionaries. We begged him to send us some newspapers, as we had had no news from Europe for more than three years.

The interpreter departed on his errand, and soon came back, accompanied by a porter, carrying an enormous bale of English newspapers, to which the Dutch Consul had had the kindness to add some bottles of claret, in order to help us, as he said, to revive the recollections of our country.

We passed the whole night rummaging in this incoherent mass of news that was piled up in the middle of our room, and in one of the very first newspapers that chance threw into our hands, we read an article that we thought rather curious. It was as follows: —

"We have lately received intelligence of the lamentable death of the two fathers of the Mongol Tartar Mission." After a slight glance at the Tartar countries, the author of the article continues: —

"A French Lazarist of the name of Huc took up his abode about three years ago among some Chinese families established in the valley of Black Waters, about six hundred miles from the Great Wall. Another Lazarist, whose name is not known to us, joined him with the purpose of forming a mission for the conversion of the Mongol Buddhists. They studied the Tartar language with the Lamas of the neighbouring monasteries; and it appears that, having been regarded as foreign Lamas, they were treated in a friendly manner, especially by the Buddhists, who are very ignorant, and who took the Latin of their breviaries for Sanscrit, which they do not understand, but for which they have much veneration.

"When the Missionaries believed themselves sufficiently instructed in the language, they proceeded into the interior, with the intention of commencing the work of conversion. After that period very little was heard of them, until in May last information was received that they had been fastened to the tails of wild horses and dragged to death. The immediate cause of this event is not yet known."

It may well be imagined that this article astonished us a little; and we thought we had some reason to doubt its perfect accuracy. Nevertheless, all the details were so well arranged, that the whole really seemed to bear upon it the stamp of truth, and nothing less than our return in person, safe and sound, seemed capable of refuting it.

On the following day we held at an early hour a grand reception, at which were assembled all the high dignitaries of Canton,

and the Mandarins who had accompanied us from the capital of Kiang-si. Our journey being concluded, we thought it would be proper to render publicly our accounts to the Chinese administration. We therefore ordered our servant Wei-chan to bring in all the money that we had saved since our departure from Nan-tchang-fou. There was an enormous heap of it, so that the eyes of the assistants quite sparkled as they looked at it.

"There is," said we, "a considerable sum. According to the orders of the governor of Kiang-si, all the towns through which we passed had to pay us a contribution for our maintenance, but our conscience forbade us to incur any unnecessary expense. This money therefore must now be resigned to those to whom it belongs. If it is yours," we added, addressing the functionaries of Canton, "take it." They protested with energy that they had no claim to this money.

The Mandarins of our escort, to whom we offered it, did the like; every one displayed a disinterestedness truly exemplary, and all unanimously declared, that this sum having been legally allotted to us, could belong to no one else but to ourselves.

We replied that Missionaries did not leave their home to go and amass riches in foreign countries. "Your Government," we said, "having forced us to leave Thibet, and having brought us against our own will to Canton, we could not help travelling at its expense; but now that we are about to quit the Empire, we do not wish to carry away a single sapeck. Since no one else seems to lay claim to this money, we would ask whether it may be allotted to our servant. Does any one object to our proposal?"

The council having signified its approval of this suggestion, we informed Wei-chan that this little treasure belonged to him, and for fear the Mandarins should afterwards take it into their heads to seize upon it, we advised him to carry it away immediately and place it in security. Wei-chan did not wait to be told twice, but instantly took possession of the cash and disappeared, and we never saw him again.

The Imperial Commissioner Ky-yn was still at that time Viceroy of the province of Canton. He offered us a junk to take us the same day to Macao; but, as we expressed a wish to remain for a while at Canton, where we had some European friends, we were escorted, at our request, to the Dutch factory. The excellent M. van Bazel sent a receipt for us to the Viceroy, and from that moment our official relations with the Chinese authorities were terminated.

Two days afterwards we had clasped in our arms our old friends

and dear brethren at Macao. For a long time we felt in the midst of them like men awakened from a deep sleep. We were astonished to see no longer around us the Thibetan, Tartar, and Chinese physiognomies, and to hear sounding in our ears only that beautiful native tongue whose harmonious accents made every fibre of our souls thrill with joy, and our eyes gush full of delicious tears. France was still far from us, and yet we seemed to have found it again. There was in the roads a French corvette, *La Victorieuse*, and we used to like to go and walk on the sea-shore merely to look at the flag floating at its mast. When we went to visit our little France, as we called it, we seemed to be breathing the air of our country and living in the very midst of it.

A month after our arrival at Macao, M. Gabet, forgetting his infirmities and sufferings, and listening only to his devotion to the sacred cause in which he was engaged, embarked for Europe, in the hope of exciting the zeal and charity of the Catholics in favour of the interesting populations of Tartary and Thibet, for whose salvation he would gladly have laid down his life. We hoped at the time soon to meet again this companion of all our wanderings, the friend whose existence was in some measure identified with our own. But such was not the will of God. One day we received the afflicting news that this indefatigable and courageous Missionary had yielded his last breath on the coast of Brazil. When, amid the snows of high Asia, we had been so solicitous to recall the vital warmth into the nearly frozen limbs of our friend, we little thought that God had appointed him to find a grave on the burning shores of South America.

After a tolerably long residence at Macao, we ourselves set off once more on the road to Pekin, thus traversing China for the third time, and, as we have already stated in our former work, the shattered state of our health subsequently obliged us to return to France, after having visited on our way India, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria.

We embarked first for China in the year 1838, and we were not permitted to see our native country again till 1852. We landed at last in the month of June at the period of the glorious solemnities of the Fête-Dieu, when the city of Marseilles presented a spectacle that will never be effaced from our recollection. O God! how beautiful was our Catholic France; how worthy of the love of all her children! Blessed be the Lord that He permitted us to endure some sufferings among foreign nations, since He reserved for us in the end such happiness as few men have ever felt, and which our feeble and imperfect powers are altogether inadequate to express.

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